Printing, Power, and Piety

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Printing, Power, and Piety

Appeals to the Public during the Early Years of the English Reformation

By

Brad C. Pardue

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

This book is dedicated to my loving wife, Hannah

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments ix

1. William Tyndale and Early Modern Appeals to the Public during the English Reformation 1
   - I. New Appeals to the Public between 1525 and 1535 1
   - II. Publics, Publicness, and the Public Sphere 6
   - III. The Role of Printing and Vernacularization 15
     1. Printing 16
     2. Vernacularization 21
   - IV. The Legacy of Tyndale's Translations and Theology 27
   - V. The Structure of the Following Study 32

2. "[T]he very brest of all this batayle…the questyon whyche is the chyrche": The Conflicting Ecclesiologies of William Tyndale and Thomas More 35
   - I. Spirituality and Temporality: Two Estates or Two Regiments? 35
   - II. More and Tyndale on the Church, Scripture, and Religious Authority 41
     1. Thomas More's Understanding of the Church 42
     2. William Tyndale's Understanding of the Church 50
     3. The "pure worde of god" or "vnwritten verities": Scripture and Tradition As Competing Sources of Authority 61
   - III. Conclusion: Tensions in More's and Tyndale's Positions and the Implications of Their Ecclesiologies .. 68

3. Implications of Media: How Vernacularization and Printing Shaped the Content and Reception of the Writings of William Tyndale and Thomas More 71
   - I. The Battle of Ideas in the Theater of Material Production 71
   - II. Readers of Reformist Literature 77
   - III. Printing and Circulation 83
   - IV. Additional Implications of the Medium of Print 90
   - V. Conclusion 99

4. Thomas More and Henry VIII at Cross-Purposes 103
I. The English Situation in Early 1532: More's *Confutation* Preface 103
II. Safe Conducts for English Reformers 114
1. Simon Fish and the *Supplication of the Beggars* 115
2. Stephen Vaughn's Mission to the Reformers in 1531 121
III. Conclusion: More's Position Becomes Untenable 140

5. William Tyndale, Henry VIII, and the Royal Supremacy 145
I. Henry VIII: "Defender of the Faith" and "Supreme Head of the Church of England" 145
II. Tyndale on the King and the Two Regiments 154
1. Kings in the Temporal Regiment 161
2. Kings in the Spiritual Regiment 165
III. The Royal Supremacy and Henrician Propaganda in the 1530s 174

Conclusion: Tyndale's Enduring Legacy 183
I. The Great Bible Woodcut of 1539 183
II. Cranmer's Great Bible Preface 198
III. The Religious and Political Legacies of Tyndale's Thought 204

Afterword 215
Bibliography 219
Index 229

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CHAPTER ONE

WILLIAM TYNDALE AND EARLY MODERN APPEALS TO THE PUBLIC DURING THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

I. *New Appeals to the Public between 1525 and 1535*

The years between 1525 and 1535 were undoubtedly among the most pivotal and transformative in English history. At the beginning of this period, Henry VIII still gloried in his recently acquired title *fidei defensor*, received from Pope Leo X for his defense of the traditional Catholic faith against the threat of Lutheran heresy in *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum*. A decade later, Henry had withdrawn his realm from obedience to the Catholic hierarchy and its head the pope, whom the king's apologists now pointedly termed merely "the bysshoppe of Rome," decrying his "wronge vsurpation and tyranny."[1] In 1525, England was one of the only lands in Western Europe without printed vernacular scriptures and efforts by the English exile William Tyndale to print such a translation in the German city of Cologne were foiled.[2] Ten years later, Tyndale's associate Miles Coverdale issued the first complete printed English Bible, dedicating it to "the most victorious Prynce and our most gracyous soueraigne Lord, Kynge Henry the eyght…vnder God the chefe and supreme heade of the Church of Englonde."[3] In 1525, Thomas More was one of England's leading intellectuals, a talented humanist at the beginning of a promising political career. In 1535, More went to the block for his resistance to Henry's divorce and the break from Rome.

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[1] Thomas Swinnerton, *A litel treatise ageynste the mutterynge of some papists in corners* (London, Thomas Berthelet, 1534), sig. A2r–3r.

[2] After he failed to receive the patronage of Bishop Cuthbert Tunstal of London, Tyndale left his native land never to return. Later he would reflect, "there was no place to do it [i.e. translate scripture] in all englonde, as experience doth now openly declare" [William Tyndale, *The first book of Moses called Genesis {The Pentateuch}* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1530), sig. A4r].

[3] Miles Coverdale, *Biblia The Bible, that is, the holy Scripture of the Olde and New Testament* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1535), sig. ╬2r.

Underlying and tied up with these dramatic changes was another process of perhaps even greater long-term significance, the creation or emergence of "the public." The events of the early English Reformation played themselves out before the nation and the people to an extent which earlier religious and political movements had not, and the actors at the center of the drama sensed this development. Indeed, they consciously appealed to a public through the new medium of print and in the vernacular. William Tyndale was the first to do so systematically. Through his translations of scripture and his other writings he provided both the material preconditions for more open public discussion of religious issues and a theological justification for broader participation in that discussion. He was just the most prominent of a group of early English reformers, among them Simon Fish, Robert Barnes, John Frith, George Joye, William Roye, and Jerome Barlow, who published from exile a wide range of reformist literature.[4] Tyndale's appeal was grounded in a new ecclesiology centered on the "congregacion, which is the body of Christ."[5] His theology implied a radically new conception of the relationship between the individual and society as a whole, at least in the religious sphere. His writings, both in their content and their form, also suggested new perspectives on the nature of authority and legitimacy. Tyndale not only appealed to the public, he encouraged and provoked others to do so as well. In *Practice of Prelates* (1530), he challenged Henry VIII, "If the kinges most noble grace will neades haue a nother wyfe, then let hī serch the lawes of god, whether it be lawfull…then let his grace put forth a litle treatyse in prynte and euen in the english tongue that all mē maye se it, for his excuse and the defence of his deade."[6]

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[4] In a short essay entitled "English Protestant Books Printed Abroad, 1525–1535: An Annotated Bibliography," Anthea Hume discusses forty-one works produced by these reformers during the period between 1525 and 1535. Of these works, roughly thirty percent were translations of various portions of scripture while forty percent were by William Tyndale. Aside from a few key texts such as Tyndale's New Testament and his *Obedience of a Christian Man*, the scholarly literature on the period seldom addresses this important body of source material. For Hume's essay, see Louis Schuster, Richard Marius, James Lusardi, and Richard Schoeck, eds., *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More, Volume 8, The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer, Part II, The Text, Books V–IX, Appendices* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 1065–1091.

[5] William Tyndale, {*New Testament*} (Cologne, Peter Quentell, 1525), sig. A2r.

[6] William Tyndale, *The practyse of Prelates. Whether the Kinges grace maye be separated from hys queen, be cause she was his brothers wyfe* (Antwerp, Hoochstraten, 1530), sig. H7r.

By mid 1526, copies of Tyndale's English New Testament, issued from the press of Peter Schoeffer in Worms, began to make their way across the Channel, often unbound and hidden among the bales of cloth that constituted one element of the thriving trade with the Netherlands. By the end of the year, a pirated edition was also being distributed by the Antwerp printer Christoffel van Ruremund.[7] The English authorities responded by publicly burning the few copies they had managed to seize at Paul's Cross on October 28, 1526.[8] However, it quickly became apparent that more needed to be done to stem the tide of heresy. Tyndale's vernacular appeal to the people of England had to be answered. Consequently, in March 1528, Bishop Cuthbert Tunstal of London commissioned Thomas More to produce just such a response "in our native tongue…which will reveal to the simple and uneducated the crafty malice of the heretics."[9] More's voluminous polemical writings, published between 1529 and 1534, set out the case for the traditional faith before the common man despite the fact that More personally felt strong misgivings about the whole project. In his *Confutation* (1532), he suggested that "surely the very best waye were neyther to rede thys [book] nor theirs."[10] More was right to be concerned, for by engaging in a printed English debate with the reformers he was implicitly conceding the capacity and role of the public in legitimizing religious belief.[11] As Mark Edwards has demonstrated in his

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[7] Paul Arblaster, Gergely Juhász, and Guido Latré, *Tyndale's Testament* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 5.

[8] For further discussion of this event and the date on which it most likely occurred, see J.F. Mozley, *William Tyndale* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1937), 117.

[9] Tunstal encouraged More, "you, dearest brother, can play the Demosthenes in our native tongue just as well as in Latin, and are wont in every fight to be a most keen champion of catholic truth, you can in no wise better occupy your leisure hours—if you can steal any from your duties—than in putting forth some writings in English which will reveal to the simple and uneducated the crafty malice of the heretics, and render such folk better equipped against such impious supplanters of the church" [Charles Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstal: Churchman, Scholar, Statesman, Administrator* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1938), 363].

[10] Thomas More, *The cōfutacyon of Tyndales answere made by Thomas More knght lorde chaūcellor of Englonde* (London, William Rastell, 1532), sig. Ee3r. In his biography of his famous father-in-law, William Roper recalled an occasion on which More declared, "I would wish, for all that [i.e. the energy he expended in writing his polemical works], vpon conditiō that Heresies were suppressed, that all my Bookes were burned, & my labour lost" [William Roper, *The mirrour of virtue in worldly greatnes. Or The life of Syr Thomas More Knight* (Paris{?}, 1626 <1557>), 77].

[11] I am certainly not the first to make this observation. See William Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants, 1520–1535* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 309.

analysis of Luther's contemporary appeals to the public in Germany, printed vernacular religious writings not only conveyed the reformers' message, they embodied it.[12]

Thomas More used all of the resources at his disposal as chancellor in his struggle against heresy, both the printed word and an extensive network of agents and informants in England and on the Continent. Nevertheless, he found his efforts frequently undermined by the most seemingly unlikely of persons, Henry VIII, the 'defender of the faith' himself. By early 1527, Henry was determined to divorce Catherine of Aragon and to marry Anne Boleyn.[13] The failure of a legatine tribunal to resolve the matter in Henry's favor in the summer of 1529 precipitated the fall of Henry's chief minister, Cardinal Wolsey. It also contributed to the decision to begin what one scholar has called "a major campaign of propaganda and publication."[14] A series of works, commissioned by Henry and his chief minister Thomas Cromwell and issued by the king's printer Thomas Berthelet, attempted to shape public opinion and to appeal to the public good. As one character expressed the situation in *The glasse of the truthe*, sometimes attributed to Henry, a solution had to be found for the king's great matter "for his honour and quieting of conscience, for oure great welthe, & for the prosperite of this his noble realme."[15] The appeal of Henry's regime to the public was, like More's appeal on behalf of the church, complicated by underlying contradictions. Indeed, Christopher Warner has gone so far as to argue, "Henry's image and its discursive rules were hypocritical."[16] The king had no desire to recognize a public discourse that would circumscribe his own freedom of action.

In the late 1520s and early 1530s, these three appeals to the public became intertwined in fascinating ways. While Thomas More struggled to silence Tyndale, whom he called the father of the English

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[12] Mark Edwards, *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 57.

[13] A goal greatly complicated by the fact that Catherine's nephew was the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V whose forces sacked Rome in 1527, effectively making Pope Clement VII the emperor's pawn.

[14] Roland Worth, *Church, Monarch and Bible in Sixteenth Century England: The Political Context of Biblical Translation* (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2000), 8.

[15] Anonymous, *The glasse of the truthe* (London, Thomas Berthelet, 1532{?}), sig. A4r.

[16] Christopher Warner, *Henry VIII's Divorce: Literature and the Politics of the Printing Press* (Rochester: The Boydell Press, 1998), 12.

heretics, members of Henry's inner circle, recognizing that a break from Rome might be the only way to get the king what he wanted, came to believe that certain ideas articulated by the reformers might prove useful to their cause, particularly criticisms of papal authority and Tyndale's doctrine of obedience.[17] As Richard Rex has observed, "Tyndale's works provided a ready-made and accessible ideology with which to buttress the transfer of obedience from the papacy to the monarchy."[18] However, efforts by Cromwell's agent Stephen Vaughn to recruit Tyndale as an advocate for the king in 1531 were unsuccessful due to profound differences in the two parties' views on the relationship between church and state. At the same time, as Christopher Warner has shown, More skillfully used his position as chancellor, his authority as spokesman for the church, and his access to print through the presses of his relatives John and William Rastell, to manipulate Henry's public image as defender of the faith in an effort to counteract the king's slide towards heterodoxy and the growing rift with the papacy.[19]

In the short term, it would be coercive power rather than rhetorical appeals to a nascent public which would win the day. With the authority that he could bring to bear as chancellor, More was extremely effective in disrupting the reformers' distribution networks, stemming the tide of heretical works into the country, punishing heretics at home, and threatening Tyndale and his associates abroad, provoking what William Clebsch has termed "the Silent Years."[20] Henry, with all the power of the Tudor state behind him, was even more successful. By 1535, he had broken away from the Catholic Church, instituted the royal supremacy, and silenced the dissenting voices of John Fisher and Thomas More, executed in June and July respectively. In late October or early November 1536, Tyndale was burnt at the stake by representatives of Charles V near Vilvoord Castle outside of Brussels. Appeals to Henry to intervene in his case were ignored. The king now seemed firmly ensconced at the top of both the political and religious hierarchies. But the public to which Tyndale, More, and Henry had appealed, once called into being, would not go away. While the new

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[17] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. Aa3v.

[18] Richard Rex, "The Crisis of Obedience: God's Word and Henry's Reformation," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (1996): 873.

[19] Warner, *Henry VIII's Divorce*, 56–57.

[20] September 1531–1534 (Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants*, 174–180).

Tudor state and church were reaffirmations of the traditional hierarchical view of society, what Charles Taylor has termed "hierarchical complementarity," their theological underpinnings (intimately tied up with Tyndale's theology and his advocacy of vernacular scriptures) pointed in another direction, to the centrality of the individual and to the importance of public debate.[21]

II. *Publics, Publicness, and the Public Sphere*

Before examining the appeals of Tyndale, More, and Henry VIII to the public in the early sixteenth century in greater detail, it is necessary to step back and consider more carefully the nature of "the public" and the vast scholarly literature surrounding it. The concept of the public is much more complex than it may at first appear, both historically and theoretically. Scholars of the reformation have long assumed the existence of such an entity in their work. A.G. Dickens wrote in 1968, "For the first time in human history a great reading *public* judged the validity of revolutionary ideas through a mass-medium which used the vernacular" (italics added).[22] Mark Edwards clearly had something similar in mind when he spoke of how the Reformation "saw the first major, self-conscious attempt to use the recently invented printing press to shape and channel *a mass movement*" (italics added).[23] This approach to the topic, the concrete or material, suggests avenues of research regarding print culture, print runs, editions, distribution, and reception. The books through which Tyndale, More, and Henry sought to reach out to the public were objects of material culture that had to be produced, distributed, purchased, and read.

The history of printing and of the book has enjoyed a period of intense scholarly activity in recent years. Elizabeth Eisenstein's monumental work, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, first published in 1979, has recently been updated and reissued.[24] New research

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[21] Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 15–16; Timothy Rosendale, "'Fiery tongues:' Liturgy, and the Paradox of the English Reformation," *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 4, Pt. 1 (2001): 1161.

[22] A.G. Dickens, *Reform and Society in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1966), 51.

[23] Edwards, *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther*, 1.

[24] Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communication and Cultural Transformation in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge

examining how the English book trade functioned by Adrian Johns, on reading and reading practices by James Raven, Helen Small, and Naomi Tadmor, and on the spread of literacy among the English population by Nigel Wheale has greatly increased our understanding of these developments.[25] Review essays by Cyndia Susan Clegg and Kevin Sharpe further chart progress and remaining challenges within the field.[26] Unfortunately for the student of the early English Reformation, most of this literature has focused on the later Elizabethan period or on the seventeenth century.

On another front, the relationship between printing, print culture, and the Reformation during its early years in Germany has been carefully explored by Mark Edwards and John Flood.[27] Interestingly, William Tyndale's writings, their printing history, and impact, paralleling in many ways in the English context what was occurring in Germany, have not been examined in the same detail. Indeed, in his recent work, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion*, Andrew Pettegree devotes two chapters to the role of print in the spread of the Reformation message but has almost nothing to say about England in the 1520s and 1530s.[28] Fortunately, this oversight has begun to be amended by Guido Latré and others.[29] The present study fills a significant void in the existing scholarship and also points out important ways in which early English appeals to the public paralleled and diverged from those taking place elsewhere on the Continent.

University Press, 1979); Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[25] Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); James Raven, Helen Small, & Naomi Tadmor, *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Nigel Wheale, *Writing and Society: Literacy, Print and Politics in Britain 1590–1660* (London: Routledge, 1999).

[26] Cyndia Susan Clegg, "History of the Book: An Undisciplined Discipline?," *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (2001): 221–245; Kevin Sharpe, "Print, Polemics, and Politics in Seventeenth-Century England," *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (2002): 244–254.

[27] Edwards, *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther* (1994); John Flood, "The Book in Reformation Germany," in Jean-François Gilmont, ed., *The Reformation and the Book* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).

[28] Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[29] Orlaith, O'Sullivan, *The Bible as Book: The Reformation* (London: The British Library, 2000) and Paul Arblaster, Gergely Juhász, and Guido Latré, *Tyndale's Testament* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003).

At the same time, the public was not merely or even primarily a collective mass of individual readers with their books in hand. It was also a powerful rhetorical and discursive concept and this aspect of the public and publicness must also be examined. Here the vast literature generated in response to Jürgen Habermas' *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, first published in the early 1960s and translated into English as *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (1989), must be considered. Habermas described the formation of what he called the "bourgeois public sphere," by which he meant "the sphere of private people come together as a public."[30] According to Habermas, the public sphere serves as a discursive space where reasoned dialogue concerning issues of public interest could occur. The resulting "public opinion" serves as a check on the absolutist pretensions of the state. He argued that this public sphere first developed in the eighteenth century, and he related it to an expanding economy, the trickling down of Enlightenment ideas, and the development of new forms of association (e.g. the periodical and the coffee house).

Habermas' ideas have come under attack from a variety of scholars with widely differing backgrounds and agendas. For example, Marxist writers were quick to argue that the "bourgeois public sphere" was nothing but a "façade of legitimation" for the bourgeois elite.[31] More recently, feminist scholars have suggested that by its very nature the public sphere Habermas describes contained within itself the gendered limitations of its own democratic potential.[32] Bourgeois beliefs regarding the public role of men and the private role of women were projected onto society as a whole. A new literature is emerging on "counterpublics," by means of which minorities and the disenfranchised challenge and subvert the threatening hegemony of the dominant public

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[30] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 27.

[31] Habermas himself pointed out, "Marx denounced public opinion as false consciousness; it hid before itself its own true character as a mask of bourgeois class interests" (Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 124). For further discussion of the original context of Habermas' work and its early critics in postwar West Germany, see Peter Uwe Hohendahl, "Critical Theory, Public Sphere and Culture. Jürgen Habermas and His Critics," *New German Criticism*, No. 16 (1979): 89–118; Hohendahl, "Recasting the Public Sphere," *October*, Vol. 73 (1995): 27–54.

[32] For a survey of such critiques refer to Greg Laugero, "Publicity, Gender, and Genre: A Review Essay," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (1995): 429–438.

discourse.[33] Meanwhile, postmodernists complain that Habermas tells a teleological story of emancipation, a metanarrative with which they are highly uncomfortable.[34] Finally, Harold Mah argues that historians in particular have tended to oversimplify Habermas and to conceive of the public sphere "spatially," thus obscuring its rhetorical and even fictive aspects.[35]

Despite these criticisms, the concept of the public sphere continues to underlie a great deal of recent historical writing. Engagement with Habermas' thought has led several historians of early modern England to argue for something like a public sphere in their period. The most prominent example is the work of Peter Lake and Steve Pincus, first in a jointly-authored article in the *Journal of British Studies* and later as editors of a collection of essays.[36] They point to evidence of what they refer to as "recurrently episodic instantiations of the post-Reformation public sphere."[37] Beginning with Elizabeth's reign, they argue that an increasing number of religious, political, and economic issues were discussed by an ever broadening cross-section of the political nation. Elements within the regime circulated information in manuscript to influence members of Parliament as well as a more general adjudicating public. The explosion of cheap print in the form of pamphlets and broadsides, explored by Tessa Watt, also aided the circulation of ideas.[38] Nevertheless, Pincus and Lake conclude that such appeals to the public remained "episodic," picking up during the tumultuous

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[33] Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002); Juliette Rogers, "The 'Counter-Public Sphere': Colette's Gendered Collective," *MLN*, Vol. 111, No. 4 (1996): 734–746.

[34] See the exchange between Dana Villa and James Johnson in "Public Sphere, Postmodernism and Polemic," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 88, No. 2 (1994): 427–433.

[35] Harold Mah, "Phantasies of the Public Sphere: Rethinking the Habermas of Historians," *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 72, No. 1 (2000): 153–182. Mah observes, "The public sphere is a fiction, which, because it can appear real, exerts real political force" (Mah, "Phantasies of the Public Sphere," 168).

[36] Peter Lake & Steve Pincus, "Rethinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England," *Journal of British Studies*, 45 (2006): 270–292; Lake & Pincus, *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007). Peter Lake has also looked at appeals to the public by Puritans and Catholics in an article coauthored with Michael Questier, "Puritans, Papists, and the 'Public Sphere' in Early Modern England: The Edmund Campion Affair in Context," *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (2000): 587–627.

[37] Pincus & Lake, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," 279.

[38] Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550–1640* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

years of the Civil War, and constituting an enduring feature of political life only after the Revolution of 1688–89.[39]

There are several elements of their approach and conclusions that appear unsatisfactory. First, despite the fact that they claim to explore the emergence of a public sphere in a broad period beginning around 1530 and extending through the Glorious Revolution late in the seventeenth century, they actually have almost nothing to say about the crucial time before the middle years of Elizabeth's reign.[40] Second, the public sphere they describe was constituted primarily by "a series of exchanges…between elements within the regime and their agents, clients, and connections."[41] While the phenomenon they discuss is both interesting and significant, it lacks the independence from the state that is an essential element of Habermas' theory.[42] On the other hand, they do demonstrate the involvement of "promiscuously uncontrollable, socially heterogeneous, and, in a sense, popular audiences" in religious and political discourse.[43]

In a similar vein, Natalie Mears explores the relationship between the decisions of the Elizabethan court and public debate.[44] In 1579, as Elizabeth was considering her matrimonial options, John Stubbs published a short treatise, *A gaping gulf*, weighing in on the matter. For his trouble, Stubbs was sentenced to have his hands cut off. Clearly, the legitimacy of appeals to or by the public remained highly contested even late in the sixteenth century. In a royal proclamation denouncing Stubbs' book (issued on September 27, 1579), he was condemned for "offering to every most meanest person of judgment…authorite to argue and determine, in every blind corner, at their several willes, the affaires of publique estate."[45] Mears argues that Stubbs was operating

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[39] Pincus & Lake, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," 289, 284.

[40] Ibid., 273.

[41] Ibid., 275.

[42] Peter Lake has argued elsewhere that the early modern English "state" was not the monolithic entity that Habermas seems to be describing in his work on the eighteenth century [Peter Lake and Michael Questier, "Agency, Appropriation and Rhetoric under the Gallows: Puritans, Romanists and the State in Early Modern England," *Past & Present*, No. 153 (1996): 88–89.

[43] Pincus & Lake, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," 276–277.

[44] Natalie Mears, "Counsel, Public Debate, and Queenship: John Stubbs's 'The Discovery of a Gaping Gulf', 1579," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 44, No. 3, (2001): 629–650.

[45] Quoted in Mears, "Counsel, Public Debate, and Queenship," 648. It is interesting to note the dismissal of this public discussion as occurring in a "blind corner," a strategy used by Thomas Swinnerton forty-five years earlier in his *A litel treatise*

independently of any faction at court and thus takes issue with Pincus' and Lake's assumption that the public sphere was exclusively or primarily directed from within the government. Mears concludes, "As the initiative of a politically conscious, committed Protestant, rather than a court directive, *A gaping gulf* suggests the existence of a lively public sphere, interacting with the court but not subject to it."[46] The current study will argue that the assumptions about the nature and role of public debate that underlay Stubbs' work were a product of the earlier activities of Tyndale and his contemporaries in the 1520s and 1530s.

In his probing reflection on the nature of the historical discipline, *The Writing of History*, Michel de Certeau suggests that instead of beginning with the remainders of times past and working towards a synthesis, the present generation of historians more frequently looks for the margins of interpretive models and probes their limits. "History now intervenes in the mode of a critical experimentation with sociological, economic, psychological, or cultural models."[47] This approach to the field continues to produce fascinating new perspectives. At the same time, the application of a model from one discipline or period to another is fraught with dangers and difficulties.[48] More fruitful than a direct effort to project Habermas' public sphere back into the sixteenth century is an approach that builds on the more general insights into the nature of the public and publicness, legitimacy, and authority, which his thought has produced. Here two recent studies are particularly helpful, Michael Warner's *Publics and Counterpublics* (2002) and Charles Taylor's *Modern Social Imaginaries* (2004).[49]

The *Oxford English Dictionary* reveals the wide range of possible meanings associated with the noun "public" over the centuries.[50] More

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ageynste the mutterynge of some papists in corners (1534), to discredit discourse not recognized by the state.

[46] Mears, "Counsel, Public Debate, and Queenship," 650.

[47] Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 80.

[48] For example, John Bossy, in an article entitled "Some Elementary Forms of Durkheim" [*Past and Present*, No. 95 (1982): 3–18], shows how the terms "religion" and "society" meant radically different things in the medieval and early modern periods than they would in the eighteenth century. Uncritical application of Durkheim's model to earlier periods produces ahistorical results.

[49] Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (2002); Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (2004).

[50] The *OED* provides the following definitions: 1) "The community or people as an organized body, the body politic; the nation, the state; the interest or well-being of the community, the common good." 2) "The section of society which is interested

systematically, Michael Warner distinguishes three broad usages for the term. First, "the public" can refer to a kind of social totality, the people in general. Second, "the public" can be a concrete audience, a spectrum encompassing the spectators at a play and even the participants in a riot, "any bounded totality of audience."[51] Third, there is "the kind of audience that comes into being only in relation to texts and their circulation."[52] That this final usage designates a distinct phenomenon is evidenced by the fact that no other word (audience, crowd, people, group, etc.) captures the same relationship. This seemingly straightforward point is actually vital to understanding what Habermas meant by the "public sphere." Individuals might participate in public discourse through personal and direct conversations at home, in coffee shops, and in learned societies, but it was the wide circulation of texts that bound all of this discourse together.

In his discussion of the medieval and early modern periods, Habermas described what he called the "publicness (or publicity) of representation."[53] The king was the head of the body politic and he represented or displayed his power before it, but this did not entail the production of a public sphere distinct from the king and his government. Modern conceptions of the public are strikingly different. In Warner's words, "the public is composed of private persons exercising rational-critical discourse in relation to the state and power."[54] The public is distinct from the state and, equally important in the sixteenth-century context this project examines, from the hierarchy of the institutional church. Neither the state nor the church could force a public into existence because it is more than a group of particular individuals that could be rounded up or counted on a tax roll or baptismal registry.[55] The public is discursive and textually mediated. At the same time, one cannot reduce the public to a rhetorical addressee, because once a text enters the discursive realm the public in which it

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in or supportive of the person referred to; esp. a writer's readership; a performer's audience." 3) "A collective group regarded as sharing a common cultural, social, or political interest, but who as individuals do not necessarily have any contact with one another" [*Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2008), www.oed/com, "public," *n.*].

[51] Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 66.

[52] Ibid., 66.

[53] Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 7.

[54] Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 47.

[55] It is one of my central premises, however, that representatives of both the state and the church helped to foster its growth.

circulates may be quite different from the one the author imagined or intended.[56] Tyndale, More, and Henry VIII all found the public more difficult to control than they anticipated.

The recent work of Charles Taylor also helps to clarify some of these aspects of the public, its development, and its nature, as well as providing a useful vocabulary for discussing these issues. In a short but engaging book, Taylor explores the emergence of what he calls the "modern social imaginary," by which he means:

> the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations.[57]

For Taylor, the constituent elements of this modern worldview are the market economy, the public sphere, and the self-governing people. Although they usually remain unexamined and unarticulated, even the average person has incorporated these ideas into his or her understanding of how the world works and ought to work. Underlying them all is a new sense of the importance of the individual agent.

Taylor charts a long-term historical shift within the Western tradition from an older moral order based on the assumption of "hierarchical complementarity" to one where the individual takes priority.[58] This transition required a profound ontological shift, from an understanding of society that worked from the collective to the individual, to an understanding that began with the individual and then moved to the collective. John Locke and Adam Smith are prominent proponents of this new modern mentality. Taylor attributes part of the responsibility for the slow process of disembedding the individual to the axial religions.[59] Indeed, the Christian tradition has always contained within itself strong anti-hierarchical and leveling tendencies (e.g. Galatians 3:27–28).[60] However, these had been obscured by medieval conceptions of the church and the sacramental status of the clergy. The evangelical theology of Tyndale and his contemporaries, stressing as it did the individual experience of justification and the priesthood of all

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[56] Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 72.
[57] Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 23.
[58] Ibid., 15–16.
[59] Ibid., 57–58.
[60] This is not to deny that there are also many passages in scripture that reaffirm hierarchy.

believers, played a vital role in the emergence of new mentalities and new notions of legitimacy, the modern social imaginary that Taylor describes.

In his discussion of Habermas' public sphere and its significance, Taylor contributes several important insights that dovetail nicely with those of Michael Warner. Taylor defines the public sphere as "a common space in which the members of society are deemed to meet through a variety of media…to discuss matters of common interest; and thus to be able to form a common mind about these."[61] But what kind of space is it? He distinguishes between "topical common space," spaces of assembly from the intimacy of the living room to the mass rally, and "metatopical space."[62] In the latter, the same public discourse is seen to pass through a plurality of assemblies and places, as for example discussion of the latest events on the campaign trail discussed at the dinner table, around the water cooler, and on the editorial page. The public sphere makes possible and implies such metatopical space. Taylor is quick to point out that metatopicality is not entirely new. "The Church and the state were already existing metatopical spaces."[63] What was original about the new public was that it participated in discursive space independent, despite certain constraints, from the power of church or state.

Warner's and Taylor's reflections on what the public sphere entails and the concept and practices of publicness it assumes underlie my arguments for the significance of William Tyndale's earlier sixteenth-century appeals to the public. While Thomas More and Henry VIII also made similar appeals, only Tyndale and his camp fundamentally challenged the assumption of hierarchical complementarity on which contemporary understandings of church and state were based. Only Tyndale actively cultivated and endorsed an independent discursive sphere that stood apart from the coercive power of church or state.[64]

The public to which Tyndale, More, and Henry appealed was not identical to the public sphere that Habermas would later describe. Sixteenth-century Protestant views of human nature, usually believed

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[61] Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 83.
[62] Ibid., 86.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Contrast to More's position that ultimately the layman should defer to the authoritative and prescriptive teachings of the church hierarchy [Thomas More, *A dyaloge of syr Thomas More knyghte…touchyng the pestilent secte of Luther & Tyndale* (London, John Rastell, 1529), sig. B2v].

to be profoundly corrupted by man's sinfulness, were far more pessimistic than those held by the enlightenment thinkers of the eighteenth century. The intervention of the Holy Spirit, not man's innate rationality, legitimated his participation in discussion of religious issues.[65] As such, Tyndale's conception of the public lacked the "secularity" that Charles Taylor sees as an important aspect of the Habermasian public sphere.[66] The scale and complexity of the bourgeois public sphere also made it different in important ways from the public of two centuries earlier. Nevertheless, the activities of Tyndale and his contemporaries in the 1520s and 1530s helped to lay the groundwork for the later evolution of the public and the central place it now occupies in contemporary Western society.

III. *The Role of Printing and Vernacularization*

The appeals to the public of Tyndale, More, and Henry VIII in the 1520s and early 1530s were both quantitatively and qualitatively different than earlier such campaigns in the medieval period because they were both facilitated by and helped to foster several important developments or trends already underway as Europe entered the sixteenth century, printing and vernacularization.[67] William Tyndale's career, in particular, and even the content of his thought, was profoundly shaped by these two phenomena so it is to these two subjects that we must now turn.

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[65] Speaking of the words and stories in the English Bible he had produced, Tyndale declared, "the spryte of God only vnderstondeth thē, and where he is not there is not y^{e} vnderstondinge of the scripture" [William Tyndale, *That fayth the mother of good workes iustifieth us* {*Parable of the Wicked Mammon*} (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1528), sig. E7r]. Nevertheless, Tyndale could easily have made a statement similar to one penned by Immanuel Kant in his famous essay on Enlightenment, "if only freedom is granted [in Tyndale's case, freedom to read scripture in the vernacular], enlightenment is almost sure to follow" (Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 104).

[66] By secularity, Taylor means activity in ordinary time and the sense that "the public sphere is an association that is constituted by nothing outside of the common action we carry out in it" (Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 94).

[67] Recall A.G. Dickens' famous statement quoted at the beginning of the previous section, "For the first time in human history a great reading public judged the validity of revolutionary ideas through a mass-medium which used the vernacular" (A.G. Dickens, *Reform and Society*, 51).

1. *Printing*

The close association of printing and Protestantism is as old as the Reformation itself, and it is particularly evident in the self-understanding of the early English reformers.[68] In the preface to his English Bible of 1535, Miles Coverdale exhorted his readers to "geue thankes vnto God, that he hath opened vnto his church the gyfte… of pryntynge."[69] Robert Barnes, recognizing the potential of the medium, published the articles of heresy alleged against him and his corresponding refutations, "that youre grace ād all the worlde myght see."[70] Perhaps the strongest advocate of the providential origins of printing was the martyrologist John Foxe.[71] In 1573, Foxe declared:

> [W]e haue great cause to geue thankes to the high prouidence of almighty God, for the excellent arte of Printing, most happily of late founde out, and now commonly practised euery where, to the singular benefite of Christes Churche… and especially to the furtheraunce of true Religion.[72]

Three years later, in the third edition of his *Acts and Monuments*, Foxe returned to the subject of print, noting, "who seeth not, that the penne of Luther folowying after Erasmus and set forward by Printyng, hath set the triple crowne so awrye on the Popes head, that it is like neuer to be set straight agayne."[73] A famous woodcut from the *Acts and*

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[68] Martin Luther had spoken of printing as "God's highest and extremest act of grace, whereby the business of the gospel is driven forward." It is also worth noting that claims for the providential origins of print were not unique to sixteenth-century evangelicals. Nicholas of Cusa had made similar comments in the previous century [Brian Cummings, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 16, 20].

[69] Coverdale, *Biblia The Bible*, sig. ╪4v.

[70] Robert Barnes, *A supplication made by Robert Barnes doctoure in diuinite, vnto the most excellent and redoubted prince kinge henrye the eyght* (Antwerp, Simon Cock, 1531), sig. C3r.

[71] Foxe's skillful utilization of print to further the cause of Protestantism and his close collaborations with the Elizabethan printer John Day are the subject of John King's article, "'The Light of Printing': William Tyndale, John Foxe, John Day, and Early Modern Print Culture," *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (2001): 52–85.

[72] John Foxe, *The whole workes of W. Tyndall, Iohn Frith, and Doct. Barnes, three worthy Martyrs, and principall teachers of this Church of England, collected and compiled in one Tome together, beyng before scattered, & now in Print here exhibited to the Churche* (London, John Day, 1573), sig. A2r.

[73] John Foxe, *The first volume of the ecclesiasticall history containing the actes & monumentes* (London, John Day, 1576), 672.

Monuments makes the association visually, showing Protestants with their Bibles and Catholics with their prayer beads.

A textually mediated public certainly does not require the utilization of print. Indeed, evidence exists that in the sixteenth century the boundary between printed texts and manuscripts was complex and fluid. In his *Letter against Frith*, Thomas More noted that the reformers had taken to writing short treatises "whereof theyr scolers may shortly write out copyes."[74] Historians have found evidence of concerted efforts to reach a broad popular audience even before the introduction of printing in the 1450s. For example, Daniel Hobbins has recently described the Parisian churchman Jean Gerson as a public intellectual, noting "his public status, his literary connection to a wider public, and hence his cultural relevance."[75] Gerson mastered the use of new genera such as the tractatus, much more suited for appealing to a wide readership than the older summa, quodlibet, or commentary. Such tracts usually addressed a specific event of significance to the community as a whole.[76] In addition, Gerson wrote frequently in French and asked that his work be posted in "common places."[77]

Despite such earlier precedents, there can be no doubt that the introduction of printing in the mid-fifteenth century radically transformed the situation in Europe. Elizabeth Eisenstein has argued persuasively that print led to a revolution in European society, not merely an evolution of earlier processes.[78] Most obvious was the ever growing volume of printed materials. In the first decade of the sixteenth century, more than 400 printed works are known to have been produced in England. That number would grow to 6,000 in the 1630s and to 56,000 in the 1790s.[79] Printing also allowed for standardization. Works and ideas

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[74] Thomas More, *A letter of syr Tho. More knyght impugnynge the erronyouse wrytyng of Iohn Fryth agaynst the blessed sacrament of the aultare* (London, William Rastell, 1533), sig. a2v.

[75] Daniel Hobbins, "The Schoolman as Public Intellectual: Jean Gerson and the Late Medieval Tract," *The American Historical Review*, December 2003, http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/108.5/hobbins.html (3 December, 2007), 3.

[76] In 1429, Gerson published a tract on Joan of Arc's victory at Orleans just six days after that historic event. The various writings on Henry VIII's divorce discussed later in this study are also good examples of this new type of public writing, treating as they do "a current, popular topic in a form that could be easily distributed to a non-academic audience" (Hobbins, "The Schoolman as Public Intellectual," 20, 5).

[77] Ibid., 29.

[78] Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*, 5.

[79] Raven, *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, 5. It is worth observing that when compared to that of some of its European neighbors, the volume

that otherwise might be lost could now be preserved and more widely distributed.[80]

Before 1526, when Tyndale's Worms New Testament began to appear in England, the number of vernacular Bibles circulating in the country was probably only in the hundreds.[81] After that date there were thousands, perhaps as many as two million copies within a century of Tyndale's death.[82] Contemporaries were well aware of the profound changes print introduced. The Lollard John Tyball recalled in April 1528 an encounter the previous year with Robert Barnes. Tyball showed Barnes hand-written sections of a Lollard Bible but the reformer "dyd little regard [it]" and declared that it was "not [to] be regarded toward the new printed Testament in Englishe."[83] The introduction of printing also meant that Bibles became much more affordable and thus were within the reach of a larger section of the population. My own research, discussed in greater detail in a subsequent chapter, suggests that a Tyndale New Testament may have cost as little as 2s 2d.[84] A laborer in London might expect to make 5d per day while those outside the capital probably earned closer to 4d. Skilled workers made slightly more, 6d per day in the 1520s rising to 6.5d by 1535.[85] In

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of printed material in England was actually quite low. English presses contributed only about 3% of the total book production during the Incunabula Age (prior to 1500), approximately three hundred works of more than one sheet [Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie, *The Beginning of English Protestantism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 163–164].

[80] Referring to the writings of Wyclif and the Lollards, John Foxe spoke of "holsome and auncient writers: whose doings and teachings otherwise had lyen in obliuion, had not the benefite of Printing brought them agayne to light" (Foxe, *The whole workes*, sig. A2r). Among the literary production of the early English reformers were new printed editions of earlier Lollard texts.

[81] David Daniell, following Ann Hudson, notes that about twenty complete copies of the Lollard Bible have survived, most produced during the early fifteenth century. About two hundred and fifty total manuscript copies of various lengths are known to exist today [David Daniell, *The Bible in English* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 66].

[82] Ibid., 121.

[83] Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials, relating chiefly to religion, and the reformation of it, and the emergence of the Church of England, under King Henry VIII. King Edward VI. And Queen Mary I: Appendix: Containing Records, Letters, and other Original Writings, Referred to in the Memorials under the reign of King Henry VIII* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1822), Vol. I, Pt. II, 54–55.

[84] This estimated cost is close to that calculated by Edward Arber, 2s 6d, over a century ago [Edward Arber, ed., *The First Printed English New Testament, Translated by William Tyndale* (London: s.n., 1871), 45].

[85] Jan Luiten van Zandern, "Wages and the cost of living in Southern England (London) 1450–1700," http://www.iisg.nl/hp/dover.php (February 7, 2008); John

other words, a Tyndale New Testament would cost approximately four and a half days' wages for a skilled laborer and six days' wages for an unskilled laborer.[86]

Revisionists have long argued that the impact of printed materials should not be exaggerated in a society where only a small fraction of the population was literate. Thomas More raised this objection as early as 1533:

> [Y]f the hauynge of the scrypture in englyshe, be a thyng so requysyte of precise necessyte, that the peoples soules sholde needes perysh but yf they haue it translated into theyre owne tonge: then muste there the most part perishe for all that, except the preacher make farther prouysyon besyde, that all the people shall be able to rede yt when they haue yt, of which people farre more then four partes of all the whole dyuyded into tenne, could neuer rede englyshe yet.[87]

Modern scholarship suggests that More heavily overestimated levels of literacy in early modern England. While the likelihood that an individual could read and write varied significantly depending on his or her social background and profession, one recent study concluded that literacy rates for men and women hovered around 10% and 1% respectively in 1500, rising only to 30% and 10% by late in the seventeenth century, although levels of literacy were higher in London.[88] Reformers both in England and on the Continent sought to overcome this obstacle by calling for church funds to be reallocated to the endowment of

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Munro, "Money, Wages, and Real Incomes in the Age of Erasmus: The Purchasing Power of Coins and of Building Craftsmen's Wages in England and the Low Countries, 1500–1540," Working Paper No. 1 (May 24, 2001), Department of Economics, University of Toronto, http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/ecipa/archive/UT-ECIPA-MUNRO-01-01.pdf (February 7, 2008), 176.

[86] John Raven has argued, "Not until the nineteenth century, with fundamental changes in the technology of printing and distribution, did books genuinely become an affordable commodity for many" (Raven, *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, 9). While this is certainly true, a Tyndale Bible should not be compared with a modern Tom Clancy novel, purchased for a few dollars and then thrown away or traded in at a local used book store. The New Testament was a book for which people were willing to save and sacrifice.

[87] Thomas More, *The apologye of syr Thomas More knyght* (London, William Rastell, 1533), sig. E4r–v.

[88] Wheale, *Writing and Society*, 2. The classic study on which almost all subsequent research has built is David Cressy's "Levels of Illiteracy in England, 1530–1730," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (1977): 1–23. See also, Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

schools.[89] There were also other ways in which the line between literacy and illiteracy could be bridged. John Foxe tells the story of Raulins White, who had his son read scripture to him, and John Maundrell, who "neuer beyng without the new Testament about him, although he could not read him self…when he came into any company that could read, his booke was alwayes ready."[90] Robert Scribner has also examined the ways in which the message of the reformers could be mediated through visual images to those who could not read.[91]

Other scholars have criticized the tendency to overemphasize the role of printing because they believe too much focus on books distracts historians from devoting attention to alternative means of informing and persuading in the sixteenth century. For example, Andrew Pettegree has recently suggested that greater attention should be given to the role of preaching, music, and performance in conveying the Protestant message.[92] In particular, recent studies have emphasized the role of preaching in spreading reformed ideas to the people.[93] It should be noted that before departing England, Tyndale is known to have preached publicly in Bristol and in London.[94] Throughout his

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[89] For discussion of Luther's activities in this sphere see Sidney Jackson, "Printed Books and the Mass Mind: Some Sixteenth-Century Views," *Libri*, Vol. 18 (1968): 37. An English reformist tract argued, "Some man wolde sey euery mā may not set his children to skole bicause they be poore. Wherfore I wolde well that the children of the pore were holde to scole at the expences of the comynaltye, or that folkes shulde take the money whiche they spende so outragiously in…buylding of Monasteris Chanonryes and chapels" [Henricus Bormelius, *The summe of the holy scripture, and ordinarye of the Christen teaching, the true Christen faith*, trans. Simon Fish{?} (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser{?}, 1529), sig. C1r–v].

[90] John Foxe, *The first volume of the ecclesiasticall history contayynge the actes and monuments* (London, John Day, 1570), 1726, 2073.

[91] R.W. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

[92] He examines "the extraordinarily innovative manner in which the Reformation made its appeal for public support" (Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion*, *x*).

[93] Torrance Kirby, "The Public Sermon: Paul's Cross and the culture of persuasion in England, 1534–1570," *Renaissance and Reformation*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (2008): 3–29. For a general introduction to preaching in the period see J.W. Blench, *Preaching in England in the Late-fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries: A Study of English Sermons 1450–c.1600* (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1964). It is also worth noting Mark Edwards' observation that the vast majority of people never heard or saw Luther, Zwingli, Tyndale, or Calvin personally, and that even if they learned of them through preaching or conversation, the ultimate source for that information was usually printed material (Edwards, *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther*, 4).

[94] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1570), 1225; Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, Vol. I, Pt. II, 364.

writings, he stressed the importance of preaching and argued that it was for this purpose that all bishops and priests had originally been ordained.[95] However, until the mid 1530s it was extremely difficult and dangerous for reformers to preach openly in England. Tyndale's associate Robert Barnes was arrested after he preached a reformist sermon at St. Edward's Church in Cambridge on Christmas Eve in 1525. Even Pettegree has acknowledged that in England, "The crucial medium of the pulpit was denied the reformers. Those who proclaimed support for the Reformation in public risked the full force of the law."[96] In the period under consideration in the current study, all of the most influential English reformers were living abroad and their appeal to the public manifested itself primarily through the printed word.

2. *Vernacularization*

The second necessary element for a broad appeal to the public was vernacularization. Although Latin would remain the language of elites and the international *lingua franca* well into the eighteenth century, a public discursive space that incorporated individuals from across the social spectrum was mediated largely by vernacular texts.[97] Indeed, Benedict Anderson has demonstrated a strong connection between printing, the development of "print languages," and modern nationalism.[98] In the decades on either side of 1700, England was among the first countries in Western Europe to see the volume of vernacular texts surpass that of Latin works.[99] However, in the 1520s and 1530s the status of the vernacular and its capacities as a medium was still hotly contested. It would be the humanists, concerned as they were with the study of language and literature, who most directly explored the issue.

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[95] William Tyndale, *The obediēce of a Christen man and how Christē rulers ought to governe* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1528), sig. G7v.

[96] Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion*, 172.

[97] With reference to Tyndale's vernacular translations of scripture, Stephen Greenblatt makes the important point that even for those capable of reading an older Latin version, "the English Scriptures spoke to the heart in a way the Vulgate never could; the vernacular was the unself-conscious language of the inner man" [Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 96].

[98] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991), 135.

[99] Wheale, *Writing and Society*, 56.

Humanism is usually associated with Latinate culture so it might seem that humanists would be largely uninterested in the vernacular. On closer inspection, however, it becomes evident that many humanists defended the vernacular and some utilized it quite skillfully. In his *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, Dante expressed the opinion in the early fourteenth century that the ancient languages were immutable.[100] In his *Convivio* he asserted, "Latin makes manifest many things conceived in the mind which the vulgar tongue cannot (as those know who have command of both kinds of speech)."[101] In the fifteenth century, humanists articulated a more sympathetic view of the vernacular. Languages came to be seen as entities that developed and declined over time.[102] As such, the vernacular, if properly cultivated, could mature. In 1529, Thomas More, England's most famous humanist, would say of the English language, "for as for that our tong is called barbarouse, ys but a fantesye…there ys no doute but yt ys plentuouse ynoughe to expresse our myndys in eny thīg wherof one mā hath used to speke w^{t} a nother."[103]

Nevertheless, the relationship between humanism and the vernacular remained complex. In his *De tradendis disciplinis* (1523), J.L. Vivès advocated vernacular education, although he made his appeal in Latin.[104] Erasmus, who also called for the production of vernacular texts, likewise wrote almost exclusively in Latin and Greek. This was a transitional period when defenses of the vernacular tended to be written in Latin, both so as to be widely read and to be taken seriously. It should be noted that despite the statement by Thomas More quoted in the previous paragraph, his most famous work *Utopia* was written in Latin rather than his native English.

In England, one of the most aggressive advocates of the English language was the humanist Thomas Elyot, now best known for his *The Boke named the Gouernour* (1531).[105] He would later say of that work:

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[100] Sarah Gravelle, "The Latin-Vernacular Question and Humanist Theory of Language and Culture," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (1988): 375.

[101] Ibid., 370.

[102] Lorenzo Valla declared that all languages were created "ex institutione hominum" (Ibid., 376).

[103] More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresy*, sig. R2v.

[104] Thomas Elyot, *The Boke Named the Governour* (London: J.M. Dent & Co., 1907), *xi*.

[105] Stanford Lehmberg, *Sir Thomas Elyot: Humanist* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1960).

> I intended to augment our Englyshe tongue, wherby men shulde as well expresse more abundantly the thynge that they conceyued in theyr hartis (wherfore language was ordeyned) hauynge wordes apte for the purpose: as also interprete out of greke, latyn, or any other tongue into Englysshe, as sufficiently, as out of any one of the said tongues into an other.[106]

On another occasion, Elyot suggested that the English of his own day had more in common with Greek than did the Latin language into which many of these works had been translated.[107] Elyot also wrote an English-language handbook on medicine called the *Castel of Helth* (1536), his most popular work during his lifetime, and a Latin-English dictionary (1538).[108] Yet even Elyot worried that English as it was generally spoken would have a corrupting influence on those seeking refined expression. He suggested that young men should learn Latin before they learned English and should be protected from the "foolish" English speaking of women.[109]

Despite his glowing recommendations of the English language, Elyot did have strong reservations about its use in the most hotly contested vernacular works of the period, English Bibles. In the *Gouernour*, he suggested that the reading-list of the future ruler should include the historical books of scripture but that the New Testament "is to be reuerently touched, as a celestiall iewell or relike."[110] In his last work, *A Preservation agaynste Deth* (1545), he advised that the scriptures "require bothe learnyng and a constaunt feithe to be wel understande" and recalled the story of Uzzah (2 Samuel 6), who died when he violated the holiness of the Ark of the Covenant by touching it.[111] In a letter to John Hackett, the English ambassador to the Netherlands in April 1533, Elyot compared the progress of the English Reformation to

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[106] Thomas Elyot, *Of the Knowledg which maketh a wise man* (London, *Thomas Berthelet*, 1533), sig. A3r–v.

[107] Lehmberg, *Sir Thomas Elyot*, 126. Tyndale had made a similar statement five years earlier in his *Obedience* (Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. B7v).

[108] In the 1541 edition of the *Castel of Helth*, Elyot defended his decision to write in English, "But if phisicions be angry, that I haue written phisicke in englishe, let them remember that the grekes wrate in greke, the Romains in latin, Auicenna and the other in Arabike, which were their owne proper and maternall tongues" [Thomas Elyot, *Castel of Helth* (London, Thomas Berthelet, 1541), sig. A3v]; Thomas Elyot, *The Dictionary of syr Thomas Eliot knyght* (London, Thomas Berthelet, 1538).

[109] Thomas Elyot, *The boke named the Gouernour* (London, Thomas Berthelet, 1531), sig. C2r–4r.

[110] Elyot, *The boke named the Gouernour*, sig. F1v.

[111] Thomas Elyot, *A Preservative agaynste Deth* (London, Thomas Berthelet, 1545), sig. D5r.

"a grete kloude . . . which is likely to be a grete storm whan it fallith."[112] In expressing these views, Elyot was in complete agreement with most of the Catholic hierarchy in England and with Thomas More in particular.[113]

The need for an English Bible was the constant refrain of William Tyndale and the other reformers who gathered around him. Tyndale dedicated his life to the production of just such translations and even informed a representative of Henry VIII that if the king allowed such a translation to circulate freely in his realm he would immediately cease to write and present himself for judgment.[114] Although Tyndale suggested in the preface to his 1525 New Testament that it was unnecessary to ask "why lyght shulde be shewed to them that walke in dercknes," the reformers would eventually produce a long list of arguments for an English Bible.[115] They pointed out, for example, that scripture had originally been written in the vernacular and that Jerome's Vulgate had itself once been a vernacular translation.[116] They also argued that both the laity and many among the clergy were ignorant of even basic biblical knowledge.[117]

In addition to the association of vernacular scriptures with the more recent threat of Lutheran heresy, the story of the sixteenth-century English Bible is further complicated by events surrounding the earlier indigenous reform movement known as Lollardy.[118] Recent revisionist scholarship has suggested that the impact of Lollardy on the

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[112] Lehmberg, *Sir Thomas Elyot*, 148. Hackett was intimately involved in the ongoing search for Tyndale at that time. Also note that Bishop John Fisher had used a similar word picture in the sermon that he preached against Luther at Paul's Cross in 1521 [John Fisher, *The sermon of John the bysshop of Rochester made agayn* y^e^ *pnicious doctryn of Martin luther* (London, Wynkyn de Worde, 1521), sig. A2r].

[113] For further discussion of Thomas Elyot's fascinating career refer to Greg Walker, *Writing Under Tyranny: English Literature and the Henrician Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[114] Daniell, *Bible in English*, 151.

[115] Tyndale, *New Testament* (1525), sig. A2r.

[116] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. B4r, B7r–v.

[117] George Joye, *The Prophete Isaye, translated into englysshe, by George Joye* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1531), sig. A5v.

[118] Some standard works on Lollardy include Margaret Deanesly, *The Lollard Bible and other Medieval Biblical Versions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920), Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), and Ann Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

later Reformation was negligible.[119] However, the fact that Germany had eighteen printed editions of the German New Testament before Luther's translation of 1522, while England had none before Tyndale's 1526 Worms New Testament is a direct result of the anti-Lollard *Constitutions of Oxford* (1409) that banned new English translations.[120] Nicholas Watson has argued that this legislation, promulgated by Archbishop Arundel at the beginning of the fifteenth century killed "a nascent vernacular religious culture…that would not be equaled again for well over a hundred years."[121] Tyndale and his associates were well aware of the impediment that this legislation created and looked back approvingly to the earlier work of John Wyclif. Later in 1540, after Henry VIII allowed the distribution of the Great Bible, Thomas Cranmer would note in his preface to the work, "it is not moche aboue one hundredth yeare agoo, sens scripture hath not bene accustomed to be redde in the vulgar tonge within this realme."[122]

Tyndale's fame over the last five centuries has largely been a product of his accomplishments as a translator and scholars have long recognized his skills as a linguist. In the preface to his 1525 Cologne New Testament, Tyndale makes clear his awareness of two criteria by which translations are evaluated even today, fidelity to the original and

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[119] Contrast the perspective of A.G. Dickens in the opening chapters of *The English Reformation* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964) and the view of Richard Rex in *The Lollards* (New York: Palgrave, 2002). For possible connections between Tyndale and Lollardy, see Donald Smeeton, *Lollard Themes in the Reformation Theology of William Tyndale* (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 1986).

[120] Jane Newman, "The Word Made Print: Luther's 1522 New Testament in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Representations*, No. 11 (1985): 104. For more on the availability of vernacular Bibles on the Continent in the late medieval period refer to Andrew Gow, "Challenging the Protestant Paradigm: Bible Reading in Lay and Urban Contexts in the Later Middle Ages," in Thomas Heffernan & Thomas Burman, eds., *Scripture and Pluralism: Reading the Bible in the Religiously Plural Worlds of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

[121] Nicholas Watson, "Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel's Constitutions of 1409," *Speculum*, Vol. 70, No. 4 (1995): 859. On the same page, Watson makes an important observation, noting "the extent to which Duffy's 'traditional religion'—which he sees as having been forced out of existence in the sixteenth century by the self-interested reformism of powerful men—was itself the creation of a movement of reform, a movement that was equally imposed on English society from above, equally held in place by decades of religious repression." See Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400–c. 1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

[122] *The Byble in Englyshe, that is to saye the contēt of al the holy scrypture, both of* y^{e} *olde, and newe testamēt* (London, Edward Whitchurch, 1540), sig. ⋕1r.

clarity of the message. He asked his readers to "consydre and ponder my laboure…yf they perceive in eny places that y have not attained the very sense of the tonge, or meanynge of the scripture, or haue not geven the right englysshe worde."[123] Tyndale's opponents were quick to argue that he had indeed mistranslated his English Bible and that it was full of errors. In particular, Thomas More took issue with Tyndale's use of a few key words: "congregation" rather than "church," "senior" or "elder" rather than "priest," "repentance" rather than "penance," etc.[124] However, Richard Duerden has correctly observed that these disputes over language went much deeper than mere issues of philology and aesthetics. Instead, he suggests that "the legitimacy of a translation was determined primarily in the realm of social, ethical, and religious experience."[125]

This fact had important implications for how Tyndale's translations were received. It was Tyndale's motives and his personal associations rather than his skills as a translator that most concerned More. When Tyndale pointed out that Erasmus had likewise rendered *ecclesia* as "congregation," More responded, "I haue not contended wyth Erasmus my derlynge, bycause I found no suche malysyouse entent wyth Erasmus."[126] Several pages earlier in his *Confutation* More asserted that Tyndale had been in Wittenberg when he produced his translation and thus that he was guilty by association and his translation was tainted. Conservative critics were also concerned about the more general implications of an English Bible, that even laymen with good will would be led astray by unmonitored reading of the scriptures.

Ultimately for the reformers vernacularization was an issue of access. As one piece of reformist literature expressed it, "saint Paule hath not allōly writē his pistles vnto the prestes, but also vnto the comō Citezyns and housholers."[127] All the reformers were agreed that the church had gone astray because the clergy had conspired to withhold the truth from the people. Indeed, they often portrayed the situation as a vast conspiracy perpetrated by the church hierarchy against the

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[123] Tyndale, *New Testament* (1525), sig. A2r.
[124] More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. O3v.
[125] Richard Duerden, "Equivalence or Power? Authority and Reformation Bible Translations," in O'Sullivan, *The Bible as Book*, 11.
[126] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. q4r.
[127] Bormelius, *The Sum of the Holy Scripture*, sig. B8r–v.

laity and even against average monks and priests.[128] To quote Duerden again, what was at issue was not the "epistemological status of the Bible…but what power it has, and who has the right to wield it."[129] More always argued that the Catholic Church was not categorically opposed to vernacular scriptures. Indeed, in his *Dialogue* he even put forward a plan for an approved translation.[130] However, the reality was that More and other conservatives were wary of granting access to an English Bible even if its translator's orthodoxy was unquestionable.[131] As Mark Edwards expressed it in his discussion of the contemporary situation in Germany, vernacular writings "were the physical embodiment of a message…an address to the laity to become involved in an unprecedented way in their own religious identity."[132] This held true equally in the case of England.

IV. *The Legacy of Tyndale's Translations and Theology*

Before concluding this introduction it is important to clarify the relationship between Tyndale's conclusions and later views of the public and its connection to issues of legitimacy and authority. Guido Latré has recently asserted that Tyndale's translations of scripture "exerted a profound influence on modern political thought."[133] Yet, as Latré acknowledges, this influence was indirect and was only felt gradually over time.[134] Among the constituent elements of the modern

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[128] "And thus because y^{t} the scripture wold not agre with them they thrust it out of the waye… Abottes toke the scripture frō their mōkes…And the bisshopes in like maner to occupye their preastes with all that they shud not studye the scripture…sett vpp longe seruices wonderouse intricate" (Tyndale, *The Practice of Prelates*, sig. D8r).

[129] O'Sullivan, *The Bible as Book*, 13.

[130] More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. R3r.

[131] Bishop Stokesley's purported response to Archbishop Cranmer when asked to contribute a translation of the *Acts of the Apostles* for the Bishop's Bible further illustrates this view, "I marvel what my lord of Canterbury meaneth that thus abuseth the people in giving them liberty to read the scriptures, which doth nothing else but infect them with heresies" (Daniell, *Bible in English*, 166).

[132] Edwards, *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther*, 57.

[133] Guido Latré, "William Tyndale: Reformer of a Culture, Preserver of a Language, Translator for the Ploughboy," in Arblaster, *Tyndale's Testament*, 18.

[134] Discussing Tyndale's decision to use the word "congregation" rather than "church" and "elder" rather than "priest," Latré observes, "Behind what seems on the surface a philological quibble, there is a profound difference in the rendering of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, which eventually resulted in a change in the social and political order" (Arblaster, *Tyndale's Testament*, 19).

social imaginary, Charles Taylor includes the concept of "popular sovereignty."[135] Grounded in the political writings of John Locke, this idea that legitimacy and authority resides ultimately in the people themselves underpinned the American Revolution and resistance to the English crown in the eighteenth century. However, even a superficial look at William Tyndale's most influential original composition, *The Obedience of a Christian Man* (1528), suggests a far more conservative view of political society and of the relationship between the ruler and his subjects.

Taylor begins his examination of the emergence of the modern social imaginary with a discussion of the thought of Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) and John Locke (1632–1704). Historians have long identified their seventeenth-century writings as key sources for modern resistance theory.[136] Both men believed that civil society can only exist in the absence of private warfare. At the same time, it was generally recognized that individuals continued to exercise the right to self-preservation, such as defending themselves if set upon by thieves. Could this right of resistance be exercised in the case of a political tyrant? Locke concluded that under certain extreme conditions it could; "the inalienable right of self-preservation applies to societies as well as to individuals."[137]

The question of lawful resistance to tyranny is in fact much older than the seventeenth century and major figures discussed it throughout the medieval period.[138] During the Reformation, however, it became a particularly pressing issue for Protestants as many found themselves subject to the authority of rulers who did not recognize the new evangelical faith. This was an issue with which all the major reformers had to struggle. Cynthia Shoenberger has demonstrated that until 1530, Martin Luther was hesitant to acknowledge any right to resist political authorities, particularly in light of the Peasants' War in the mid 1520s. However, by the end of that decade many had already moved beyond Luther's position. Saxon jurists argued that the princes could

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[135] Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 109.

[136] Deborah Baumgold, "Pacifying Politics: Resistance, Violence, and Accountability in Seventeenth-Century Contract Theory," *Political Theory*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (1993): 6–27.

[137] Ibid., 17.

[138] Cynthia Grant Shoenberger, "The Development of the Lutheran Theory of Resistance: 1523–1530," *Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1977): 61–63.

resist the emperor on constitutional grounds because Charles V was a constitutionally limited monarch. At the same time, Protestant princes were actively engaged in resistance, such as their protest at the Diet of Speyer in 1529. Luther would ultimately declare, "when we previously taught positively never to resist the established authority, we did not know that such a right was granted by the laws of that very authority which we have at all times diligently instructed the people to obey."[139] In the next several decades, reformers such as Heinrich Bullinger, John Calvin, and Pierre Viret would also develop theories of resistance, growing out of their theologies of covenant.[140]

Richard Greaves has identified at least three distinct views on resistance in sixteenth-century England.[141] First, there was the conservative perspective expressed in the introductions and marginal notes of Tyndale's New Testaments and echoed in the various editions of the Great Bible after 1539.[142] Second, there was the view often attributed to Calvin but particularly developed in the writings of his successor Theodore Beza, that it was the duty and responsibility of magistrates to resist the ungodliness of the ruler on behalf of the people.[143] This bore some similarities to the view articulated by Luther after 1530. Finally, during Mary's reign John Knox argued in his *Appellation* of July 1558 that even ordinary believers had a duty to actively resist an ungodly ruler under certain circumstances.[144] Ultimately, most Englishmen repudiated this final, more radical position and Tyndale's view prevailed until the disturbances surrounding the English Civil War in the mid 1600s.[145]

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[139] Shoenberger, "The Development of the Lutheran Theory of Resistance," 64.

[140] Richard Greaves, "John Knox, the Reformation Tradition, and the Development of Resistance Theory," *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (1976): 2.

[141] Richard Greaves, "Concepts of Political Obedience in Late Tudor England: Conflicting Perspectives," *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (1982): 23–34.

[142] As Tyndale observed in a short marginal note on Titus 3 in his 1534 New Testament, "Officers must be obeyed" [William Tyndale, *The Newe Testament dylygently corrected and compared with the Greke by Willyam Tindale* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1534), sig. q6v].

[143] Greaves, "John Knox…and the Development of Resistance Theory," 7–8.

[144] Ibid., 21–22.

[145] Greaves, "Concepts of Political Obedience," 28. For example, the marginal notes for Daniel 6 in the Bishop's Bible of 1568 praise the prophet for his passive resistance to the decree forbidding prayer to anyone but the king [Matthew Parker, *The holie Bible* (London, Richard Jugge, 1568), fol. 173v].

A closer look at Tyndale's other writings further supports Greaves' assertion that his political thought did not serve to legitimate resistance. In *Obedience of a Christian Man* he declared, "Christe him selfe taught all obedience, how that it is not lawfull to resist wronge (but for the officer that is appointed there vnto)."[146] Indeed, he explicitly rejected the (Lockean) logic of resistance in his *Exposition upon V, VI, VII Matthew* (1533):

> Thou wilt happily saye: the subiectes euer chose the ruler and make him swere to kepe theyr lawe and to maynteme theyr pryuilegyes and lybertyes, and vpon that submyte their selues vnto him: Ergo if he rule amysse they are not bounde to obeye. But maye resyste him and put him downe agayne. I answer your argument is nought.[147]

Instead he argued that Christians must obey their rulers unless they are commanded to do something that violates God's laws. In that case, they must passively resist and suffer the consequences of their disobedience in silence and prayer.[148]

Tyndale's view of the secular sphere is in many ways extremely conservative, granting the king seemingly unlimited authority. As he expressed it in *Obedience*, "y^{e} kinge is in this worlde without lawe & maye at his lust doo right or wronge and shall geve a comptes, but to God only."[149] In this, Tyndale sounded like many other contemporary writers who praised kingship and Henry VIII specifically. As Thomas Elyot declared in the preface dedicating his Latin-English dictionary, "they, which rebel agaynst kynges, be enemies to god, and in wyll confounders of naturall order and prouidence."[150] There is even an account, perhaps apocryphal, that when Henry read *Obedience of a Christian Man* at Anne Boleyn's prompting he exclaimed, "this book

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[146] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. C7r. The phrase "the officer that is appointed there vnto" might seem to open the door to resistance to tyranny by magistrates (in keeping with Calvin's and Beza's later views) but in fact it reflects Tyndale's conception of man as "a double person vnder bothe the [spiritual and temporal] regimentes," the full implications of which will be considered in subsequent chapters [William Tyndale, *An exposicion vppon the v. vi. vii. chapters of Matthew which thre chaptres are the keye and the dore of the scripture* (Antwerp, Johannes Graphaeus, 1533), sig. g3v].

[147] Tyndale, *Exposition upon Matthew V–VII*, sig. g7r–v.

[148] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. K5v; Tyndale, *The Practice of Prelates*, sig. A3v.

[149] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. D8v.

[150] Elyot, *The Dictionary of Sir Thomas Eliot*, sig. A2r.

is for me and all kings to read."[151] A superficial reading of Tyndale's political thought would seem to place him much closer to Hobbesian absolutism than Lockean popular sovereignty.

If the story of Henry's statement about *Obedience* is true, it indicates that Henry must not have read the book very carefully, for in it Tyndale takes a relatively negative view of actual kings, referring to them as the "blynde powers of y^{e} worlde."[152] As Chapter Five will demonstrate, Tyndale sought very carefully to circumscribe the sphere in which the king could exercise his authority. However, the truly revolutionary implications of Tyndale's thinking appear in his ecclesiology, to which his political thought is always subordinated. Here he challenged traditional hierarchical complementarity in fundamental ways. He called for a radical leveling; "father, mother, sonne, doghter, master, servaunte, kynge and subiecte, be names in the worldly regimēte. In Christ we are all one thīge, none better thē other."[153] This also applied to the clergy. Although he recognized the biblical basis for offices such as bishop and deacon, Tyndale rejects the sacramental status of these positions and thus the ontological distinctiveness of the individuals who occupied them. "[A]s good is the prayer of a cobbler, as of a Cardinal, and of a bocker [butcher], as of a Bisshope, and the blessinge of a baker that knoweth the trouth, is as good as the blessinge of oure most holy father the Pope."[154] As David Ginsberg has argued, the "democratization of the Bible is precisely what Tyndale was after," and ultimately this democratizing influence would be felt in the secular sphere as well.[155]

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[151] Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, Vol. I, Pt. I, 171–172. For a discussion of Anne's evangelicalism and her support for the evangelical cause, see Thomas Freeman, "Research, Rumour and Propaganda: Anne Boleyn in Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs'," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 4 (1995): 797–819.

[152] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. A2v. Also note that Steven Greenblatt has characterized Tyndale's teaching in *Obedience* as a "violent obedience," which could just as easily challenge the authority of the king as reinforce it (Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 89).

[153] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. G1v. It is important to note that Tyndale's challenging of traditional hierarchical views only went so far. Statements such as the one just quoted must be interpreted in light of his writings more generally. For example, while Tyndale argued that women had the right to read and interpret scripture for themselves, he also continued to stress that they must submit to the authority of their husbands in both secular and religious matters.

[154] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. M4v–M5r.

[155] David Ginsberg, "Ploughboys versus Prelates: Tyndale and More and the Politics of Biblical Translation," *Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (1988): 46.

V. *The Structure of the Following Study*

The following chapters explore in greater detail the appeals of Tyndale, More, and Henry VIII to the public in the 1520s and 1530s. This investigation will involve several different approaches. First, it will reconstruct the fascinating and interconnected activities and agendas of these three major protagonists and their allies. Second, it will provide a close reading of key texts produced by the reformers, the representatives of the Catholic Church, and Henry's regime. Most of these works were self-consciously intended to contribute to a series of interrelated discourses, seeking to support, refute, and circumscribe each other. Equally important, they appealed to and sought to influence public opinion, although their authors quite frequently differed in their views of the nature of that public and its capacities. Finally, this study will also explore the stories of these books themselves, when they were produced, how they were circulated, and by whom they were read.

Chapter Two focuses on the conflict between William Tyndale and Thomas More over the nature of the church, the authority of the scriptures, and the capacity of the average Christian to interpret the Bible for themselves. More's biographer Richard Marius has described his subject's polemical works as "bitter, ugly, almost unreadable books" and scholars of More have preferred to focus their attention on *Utopia* or his prison writings.[156] However, More devoted a great deal of time and energy between 1527 and 1534 to his struggle against heresy and clearly believed this was his most important work. Meanwhile, Tyndale produced not only vernacular translations but also a series of theological works articulating an ecclesiology based on the church as congregation strikingly at odds with the view More defended. I will argue that it was this body of writings that would help to create and legitimate important anti-hierarchal tendencies that remained a vital part of subsequent English debates about the nature of the church.

Chapter Three considers how Tyndale's and More's use of the medium of print reflected and shaped their conflicting positions on the church and scripture and helped to determine the long-term outcome of their struggle. Roger Chartier, in his fascinating work *The Order of Books*, has correctly stressed the importance of recognizing

[156] Richard Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 424.

"the effects of meaning that material forms produce."[157] Similarly, in his study of Luther and printing, Mark Edwards has shown that for Protestants the medium and the message were linked in important ways that automatically placed the Catholic apologist at a disadvantage.[158] Examination of the polemical exchanges of Tyndale and More will reveal the same forces at work in England in the 1520s and 1530s. Additional insight into the relative influence of More's and Tyndale's writings will also be gained through consideration of the subsequent print histories of their works, a subject that has been largely neglected by scholars of the early English Reformation.

Chapter Four pulls back from the arguments presented in printed texts to explore the efforts of Tyndale and his associates to reach and indeed to cultivate the public by printing and distributing their works. It also looks at Thomas More's struggle to destroy the reformed community, disrupt the distribution of books, arrest heretics at home, and silence the reformers abroad. Christopher Warner has suggested that Henry appointed More as chancellor as part of a broader strategy to create an image of himself as a philosopher king surrounded by wise counselors.[159] This seems to have been a miscalculation on the part of both monarch and subject, for More quickly found that he had to undermine the role that Henry had scripted for him as the king drifted towards schism. More's efforts to silence the reformers were constantly hampered by the interference of Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell, who were busy pursuing their own agenda and even reaching out to the reformers themselves.

Through his agent Stephen Vaughn, Cromwell actively sought to recruit Tyndale as an advocate for the king's cause. Chapter Five examines why Tyndale's writings would have appealed to the regime around 1530 and why the two sides were ultimately unable to come to terms. Specifically, it compares Tyndale's views on the nature of political power with those of Henry and his apologists.[160] As I have argued

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[157] Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, trans. Lydia Cochrane (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), *ix*.

[158] Edwards, *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther*, 57.

[159] Warner, *Henry VIII's Divorce*, 55. More should perhaps have been more suspicious, for in the introduction to his *Utopia* he talks at length about the unwillingness of kings to listen to counsel and the dangers of life at court.

[160] Tyndale's political thought has not received the attention that it deserves given his influence in the 1520s and 1530s. For some discussion see W.D.J. Cargill Thompson,

above, Tyndale's doctrine of obedience would eventually serve as an ideological prop for Henry's state-church.[161] However, Tyndale's doctrine of the two regiments and its implications would also call Henry's position as supreme head into question.

Chapter Six examines the Henrician settlement of the mid to late 1530s and how Henry co-opted many reformed ideas to justify his break with Rome and to push his views of obedience. Henry's view of himself and his position is perhaps best revealed in the title-page woodcut of the *Great Bible* where he sits enthroned above both state and church, and this image will be the object of careful analysis. After having silenced More and having refused to intervene to prevent Tyndale's execution on the Continent, Henry distributed an English Bible to his people on his own terms. However, in his effort to get what he wanted Henry had already conceded too much. The public that he, Tyndale, and More had addressed would not be silent. Further, the new regime itself was riddled with tensions. The new church with its English Bible and, from 1549, its English liturgy "was clearly a means of hierarchical national unification" but "its theological underpinnings insisted that it was also, and primarily, a means to fuller and more authentic individual religious experience."[162] These tensions would continue to manifest themselves, in the later sixteenth century in the struggle between Elizabeth I and those who wished to see reform carried further, and later in the political sphere during the Civil War of the seventeenth century.

"The Two Regiments: The Continental Setting of William Tyndale's Political Thought," in Derek Baker, ed., *Reform and Reformation: England and the Continent, c. 1500–c. 1750* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979); Ralph Werrell, *The Theology of William Tyndale* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2006).

[161] Rex, "The Crisis of Obedience," 873.

[162] Rosendale, "'Fiery tongues:' Language, Liturgy, and the Paradox of the English Reformation," 1161.

CHAPTER TWO

"[T]HE VERY BREST OF ALL THIS BATAYLE… THE QUESTYON WHYCHE IS THE CHYRCHE": THE CONFLICTING ECCLESIOLOGIES OF WILLIAM TYNDALE AND THOMAS MORE[1]

I. *Spirituality and Temporality: Two Estates or Two Regiments?*

When Thomas More spoke of "the thre estates of holy chyrche, that is to wytte the spyrytualty the temporalty and the sowles that be in purgatory" in his *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, an immense work dedicated to refuting the early English reformers published in two parts in 1532 and 1533, he was expressing the typical medieval Catholic view of the church.[2] Christianity, which had begun as a small sect of Judaism, had over the course of fifteen hundred years become an institution that profoundly shaped and encompassed much of European society and into which nearly everyone was incorporated through baptism as a child.[3] Indeed, the church included in its number the young and the old, the rich and the poor, peasants and kings, the good and the bad, the living and the dead.[4] For More the true church was quite self-evidently "thys comon knowen catholyke chyrche of all chrysten people."[5]

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[1] Thomas More, *The cōfutacyon of Tyndales answere made by Thomas More knght lorde chaūcellor of Englonde* (London, William Rastell, 1532), sig. Ee1v.

[2] Thomas More, *The second parte of the cōfutacion of Tyndals answere* (London, William Rastell, 1533), sig. A2v.

[3] There were of course always those who were not part of the church, such as religious minorities like the Jews. Also excluded by More's definition were heretics, those "caste out for theyr obstynate malyce…[or] of wylfulnesse departyng out by sedycyouse scysmes" (Ibid., sig. a1v). However, More usually seemed to believe that the heretics were only a small, perverse minority—"And so shall it euer be by goddes grace in crystēdome, y^{t} neuer shall there ryse so many myssebyleuers, but that the trew byleuers shall be styll the strenger" (Ibid., sig. Ee4r).

[4] More insisted that the church contained both sinners and saints and that it was impossible to tell the difference conclusively until after the individual's death (Ibid., sig. Cc4v).

[5] Ibid., sig. A1r.

Yet "all chrysten people" were not held to be members of the church in exactly the same way, a fact indicated by More's reference to the spirituality and the temporality.[6] The distinction between clergy and laity is almost as old as Christianity itself. Although Paul seems to have initially envisioned the church as a body of charismatic members, already in the Pastoral Epistles the New Testament speaks of leaders called bishops, deacons, and elders.[7] As Catholic doctrine and practice developed, the clergy became a distinct class within the church above and separated from the laity by the sacrament of ordination. It was this ordination, tied to the idea of apostolic succession, that gave the priest the power to officiate at the mass, the central ritual of the Catholic Church—in More's words, "to offer vppe dayly y^{e} same sacryfyce that our sauyour offred onys, and hath ordayned to be by the prestes perpetually offred in hys chyrche."[8] The Gregorian reforms of the eleventh century, which included efforts to impose celibacy on priests, further set them apart. The clergy also claimed other privileges such as exemption from the jurisdiction of secular courts. Over time, these spiritual elites within the church themselves began to be divided into a complex hierarchy as various functions came to be associated with different offices.[9]

Throughout the medieval period, the privileges of the clergy and the shortcomings and worldliness of some priests and bishops had provoked the anger of clerical reformers and the common people alike.[10] Sixteenth-century evangelicals such as Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli,

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[6] While works in Latin used the terms *clericus* and *laicus*, from which we derive our "clergy" and "laity," authors writing in English just as frequently used the words "spirituality" and "temporality," as More did in his *Confutation* and as the London lawyer Christopher St. German chose to do in the title of his work of 1530, *A treatise concernynge the diuision between the spirytualtie and the temporaltie*.

[7] Compare Romans 12:3–8 and 1 Corinthians 12 to 1 Timothy 3:1–13 and Titus 1:5–9.

[8] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. i2v.

[9] In 1529, Simon Fish, an associate of Tyndale and a distributor of the translator's works, would complain in one of his own writings about the multitude of "Bisshoppes, Abbottes, Priours, Deacons, Archedeacons, Suffraganes, Prestes, Monkes, Chanons, Freres, Pardoners and Somners" who were sapping the precious resources of England [Simon Fish, *A Supplicacyon for the Beggers* (Antwerp{?}, Johannes Graphaeus, 1529), fol. 1v].

[10] For more discussion of anticlericalism during this period refer to Peter Dykema and Heiko Oberman, eds., *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 1993). Anticlericalism may have been more common in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries because of rising lay expectations rather than declining standards of clerical behavior.

and William Tyndale continued to echo many of the age-old complaints about clerical excesses and deficiencies.[11] At the same time, Luther and the other reformers who soon followed in his footsteps offered a much more serious theological challenge to the traditional understanding of the church, an assault that went beyond mere anticlericalism. Already in his key theological works of 1520, Luther's attacks on traditional Catholic teachings about the sacraments and his articulation of the "priesthood of all believers" laid the groundwork for an alternative reformed ecclesiology.[12] Building on Luther's foundations, in the late 1520s and early 1530s William Tyndale would develop a vision of the English church strikingly at odds with the hierarchical institution that More described in his *Confutation*.

Whereas in the traditional Roman Catholic scheme the individual was either a member of the spirituality or the temporality, Luther argued instead that all believers were simultaneously members of two kingdoms or regiments, *das geistliche Reich* and *das weltliche Reich*.[13] The spiritual regiment was concerned with salvation and individuals' souls. It concerned the inner life and was free from compulsion, governed by the Word of God and guided by the Holy Spirit. The temporal regiment, on the other hand, was concerned with externals, with the maintenance of peace in the world.[14] Instituted by God, temporal

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[11] Diarmaid MacCulloch has advocated the use of the name "evangelicals" rather than the often anachronistic "protestants" (originally only applicable to some of the German representatives present at the Imperial Diet of Speyer in 1529), arguing that the former "has the advantage that it was widely used and recognized at the time, and it also encapsulates what was most important to this collection of activists: the good news of the Gospel, in Latinized Greek, the *evangelium*" [Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided, 1490–1700* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), xx].

[12] W.D.J Cargill Thompson, *The Political Thought of Martin Luther*, ed. Philip Broadhead (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1984), 27–30. In his first English polemical work, More would attack vigorously as heretical the idea "y^{t} euery crysten man and euery crysten woman ys a preste." [Thomas More, *A dyaloge of syr Thomas More knyghte…touchyng the pestilent secte of Luther & Tyndale* (London, John Rastell, 1529), sig. S1v].

[13] For further discussion of Luther's use of *das geistliche Reich* and *das weltliche Reich* and related phrases, refer to an essay by Cargill Thomason entitled "Zwei-Reiche/Zwei-Regimente-Lehre" in the volume W.D.J. Cargill Thompson, *Studies in the Reformation: Luther to Hooker*, ed. C.W. Dugmore (London: Athlone Press, 1980), 42–59.

[14] "God has ordained two governments: the spiritual, by which the Holy Spirit produces Christians and righteous people under Christ; and the temporal, which restrains the un-Christian and wicked so that…they are obliged to keep still and to maintain an outward peace" [Martin Luther, "Temporal Authority: To What Extent it Should

authorities exercised the power of the sword to punish evildoers and to compel obedience. For Luther, this division between the spiritual and temporal was much more significant than the distinction between clergy and laity. Luther's teachings on the two kingdoms had profound implications for both the individual Christian and for the church as a whole.

Luther expressed his doctrine of the two regiments perhaps most clearly in a short work of 1523 entitled "Temporal Authority: To What Extent it Should be Obeyed." His central text was Matthew 5:38–41, a passage in the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus instructed his followers (in Tyndale's English rendering), "Ye have herde howe it is sayd, an eye for an eye: a tothe for a tothe. But I say vnto you, that ye withstond not wrōge."[15] Traditional Catholic exegesis had concluded that such pronouncements were too difficult for the average man or woman and that they therefore were intended to apply only to spiritual elites such as priests or monks. Luther rejected this interpretation and its implied distinction between clergy and laity, arguing that the commands of scripture were equally binding on all Christians. Luther argued that according to this passage of scripture, the Christian *qua* Christian, e.g. as a member of the spiritual regiment, must not resist evil. However, as a member of the temporal regiment one had an obligation to fulfill the responsibilities associated with one's calling as father, mother, ruler, judge, or soldier.[16]

Luther also argued that in the Catholic Church of his day the two regiments had become hopelessly confused. Temporal rulers had involved themselves in the affairs of the church and the spiritual regiment, well outside their appropriate sphere of action. He declared, "The temporal government has laws which extend no further than to

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be Obeyed," in Walther Brandt, ed., *Luther's Works, Vol. 45, The Christian in Society, II* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1962), 91].

[15] William Tyndale, {*New Testament*} (Cologne, Peter Quentell, 1525), sig. D2r.

[16] In Luther's words, "A Christian should be so disposed that he will suffer every evil and injustice without avenging himself…On behalf of others, however, he may and should seek vengeance, justice, protection, and help and do as much as he can to achieve it" (Luther, "Temporal Authority," 101). He would flesh out the full implications of these ideas a few years later in another work provocatively entitled "Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved" (1526), arguing that in the temporal regiment Christians "must fight and be obedient [to worldly rulers], not as Christians, but as members of the state and obedient subjects" [Martin Luther, "Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved," in Robert Schultz, ed., *Luther's Works, Vol. 46, The Christian in Society, III* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 99].

life and property and external affairs on earth… [it] should be content to attend to its own affairs and let men believe this or that as they are able and willing."[17] Even more troubling, the church had usurped the powers of the temporal regiment. The ecclesiastical hierarchy had amassed wealth and power in the world and now lorded over the laity like secular rulers when, according to scripture, "Their government is not a matter of authority or power, but a service and an office, for they are neither higher nor better than other Christians… Their ruling is rather nothing more than the inculcating of God's word, by which they guide Christians and overcome heresy."[18] To reform the church, he believed, would require a radical reordering of its structure, methods, and ends.

As with so many of Luther's ideas, his teachings on the two regiments exerted a strong influence on the first generation of English reformers. Robert Barnes, who fled England in 1528 and spent several years in Wittenberg living in the house of John Bugenhagen (the parish pastor in the town and a close friend of Luther), wrote to Henry VIII in his *Supplication* of 1531, "Here is playne that your grace must haue fulle power over al worldlye courses, and the bysshops allonly mynistracion of the worde of God: and as your grace maye not vsurpe to preache the worde of god, no more maye they vsupre any power yᵗ belōgeth to youre swerde."[19] Tyndale also maintained the distinction between the two regiments throughout his writings.[20] He discussed the issue at length in his own study of the Sermon on the Mount and it would profoundly inform the development of his ecclesiology.[21]

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[17] Luther, "Temporal Authority," 105, 108.

[18] Ibid., 117.

[19] Robert Barnes, *A supplication made by Robert Barnes doctoure in diuinite, vnto the most excellent and redoubted prince kinge henrye the eyght* (Antwerp, Simon Cock, 1531), sig. B8r.

[20] William Tyndale, *The obediēce of a Christen man and how Christē rulers ought to governe* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1528), sig. G1v; William Tyndale, *The practyse of Prelates. Whether the Kinges grace maye be separated from hys queen, be cause she was his brothers wyfe* (Antwerp, Hoochstraten, 1530), sig. B1r–v.

[21] "Ye must vnderstande that there be two states or degerees in this worlde: the Kyngdome of heauen which is the regiment of the Gospel. And the kyngedome of this worlde which is the temporall regiment… Now is euery person a dowble person and vnder bothe the regimentes" [William Tyndale, *An exposicion vppon the v. vi. vii. chapters of Matthew which thre chaptres are the keye and the dore of the scripture* (Antwerp, Johannes Graphaeus, 1533), sig. g3r–v]. This extended discussion of the two regiments, which occurs in one of the last works that Tyndale published, will be the subject of extensive discussion in this and subsequent chapters.

The textual evidence makes clear that Tyndale borrowed the doctrine of the two regiments directly from Luther.[22]

Despite his obvious intellectual and theological debts to Luther, Tyndale was much more than a mere transmitter of continental ideas as has sometimes been suggested.[23] Indeed, a close reading of Tyndale's writings from the mid 1520s through the mid 1530s suggests that the English reformer more consistently maintained Luther's early insights regarding the nature of the church than Luther himself. Scholars of Luther have long noted that during the late 1520s Luther became more conservative and guarded in many of his views.[24] This was particularly the case in his statements about the priesthood of all believers and the two regiments. His stark division between the spiritual and the temporal spheres quickly began to erode under pressure from both ecclesiastical and secular authorities.[25] By 1530, Luther had at least tacitly endorsed the position put forward by Melanchthon that secular magistrates had a key role to play in reforming the church as "custos utriusque tabulae," guardians of the two tables of the Ten Commandments.[26]

One looks in vain in Tyndale's writings for a similar shift towards a more conservative or pragmatic position on the relationship between the spiritual and temporal regiments or on the radical implications of the priesthood of all believers. Perhaps this reflects the fact

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[22] W.D.J. Cargill Thompson, "The Two Regiments: The Continental Setting of William Tyndale's Political Thought," in Derek Baker, ed., *Reform and Reformation: England and the Continent c.1500–c.1750* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979), 28.

[23] E. Flesseman-Van Leer, "The Controversy about Ecclesiology between Thomas More and William Tyndale," *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis*, Vol. 44 (1960): 65.

[24] The excesses of the Peasants' War of 1525, the radicalism of Carlstadt and Müntzer, and the fact that Luther's readers did not always interpret his works as he intended, all led him to emphasize more and more the importance of authority, particularly his own prophetic authority. For further discussion see Mark Edwards, *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 167–168; Jane Newman, "The Word Made Print: Luther's 1522 New Testament in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Representations*, No. 11 (1985): 98.

[25] "On the one side, many of the Protestant authorities—particularly the princes—were unwilling to observe the limits to their jurisdiction proposed by their theologians. On the other a strong contingent of clerical reformers pursued the vision of a godly society…which could not be realized without the coercive power of temporal authority…Luther did not lead this movement, but he followed it, despite misgivings he would voice until very nearly the end of his life" [Robert Bast, "From Two Kingdoms to Two Tables: The Ten Commandments and the Christian Magistrate," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, Vol. 89 (1998): 80].

[26] Broadhead, *The Political Thought of Martin Luther*, 150.

that Tyndale was never in a position of authority that would have required him actually to implement church policy and deal with its consequences.[27] However, the following examination of Tyndale's teachings on the church will demonstrate that the differences between Luther and Tyndale went much deeper. From his earliest writings to his latest, Tyndale's ecclesiology remained centered on the radical idea of the church as a congregation in which "we are all one thīge, none better thē other"—a church made up of individual, Spirit-filled, scripture-reading men and women with no place for the reclericalization which would so quickly become a mark of Protestant churches all across Europe.[28] It was, I will argue, Tyndale's ecclesiology that would eventually undermine in England traditional notions of "hierarchical complementarity," the assumption that a particular form of social organization reflected an unchangeable ontological reality.[29] As Guido Latré has so aptly expressed the situation, Tyndale's congregation implied "a profound difference in the rendering of the ecclesiastic hierarchy, which eventually resulted in a change in the social and political order."[30]

II. *More and Tyndale on the Church, Scripture, and Religious Authority*

For Thomas More, ecclesiology lay at the core of the religious debates of the sixteenth century—"the very brest [e.g. heart] of all this batayle."[31] This was particularly the case in his polemical exchanges with Tyndale. In his *Confutation*, More explained, "For ye well remember that all our mater in this boke, is betwene Tyndale and me no thynge ellys in effecte, but to fynde out whyche chyrche is the very chyrche."[32] This question was of vital importance. Across the religious spectrum

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[27] Patrick Collinson, "William Tyndale and the Course of the English Reformation," *Reformation*, Vol. 1 (1996): 72–97.

[28] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. G1v; Paul Avis, *The Church in the Theology of the Reformers* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 102.

[29] Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 15–16.

[30] Guido Latré, "William Tyndale: Reformer of a Culture, Preserver of a Language, Translator for the Ploughboy," in Paul Arblaster, Gergely Juhász, and Guido Latré, *Tyndale's Testament* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 19.

[31] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. Ee1v.

[32] Ibid., sig. l4v.

Catholics, Lutherans, Zwinglians, and even the most radical of the Anabaptists agreed with the old dictum "nulla salus extra ecclesiam," there is no salvation outside the church.[33] What remained hotly contested was which church was the true church, offering assurance of eternal salvation.

Historians have likewise concluded that the doctrine of the church was central to the Reformation, although in this case the emphasis has often been on issues of authority rather than soteriology, the former a more pressing issue in our own modern secular society. Felipe Fernández-Armesto has astutely observed, "The doctrinal differences between Protestants and Catholics cannot be boiled down to this heresy or that heresy but only to disagreement over how to identify an opinion as heretical."[34] While this is certainly overstating the case, it is true that almost every doctrine put forward by the reformers of the sixteenth century had some precedent in the rich and varied history of the Christian tradition. The reformers also claimed that their teachings had the support of scripture. Conservative defenders of Catholic orthodoxy quickly discovered that the safest response was to appeal to the authority of the church and its hierarchy.[35]

1. *Thomas More's Understanding of the Church*

Thomas More also looked to the church as a source of certainty and assurance in an uncertain world. Richard Marius has persuasively argued that More's views of the church reveal the influence of late medieval nominalism on his thought. In his most famous work *Utopia* (1516), More had the wise utopians describe God as "a certain single being, unknown, eternal, immense, inexplicable, far above the reach

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[33] Avis, *The Church in the Theology of the Reformers*, 1.

[34] Felipe Fernández-Armesto and Derek Wilson, *Reformations: A Radical Interpretation of Christianity and the World, 1500–2000* (New York: Scribner, 1996), 91.

[35] This is already evident in the sermon that Bishop Fisher of Rochester preached at Paul's Cross in 1521 as confiscated copies of Luther's works were burned. Fisher's rebuttal of Luther and his perceived heresies consisted of four central propositions: that 1) God has promised Christians "y^{e} spiryt of trouthe" [John 15: 26], that 2) this promise pertains to "y^{e} vniuersal chirche of christ," that 3) "the heed of y^{e} vniuersall chirche . . . is the pope," and 4) that because Luther has "dyuyded hymselfe . . . [from] the heed of chrystes chirche" he was clearly a heretic [John Fisher, *The sermon of John the bysshop of Rochester made agayn* y^{e} *pnicious doctryn of Martin luther* (London, Wynkyn de Worde, 1521), sig. A3r, B4r].

of the human mind."[36] This sense of God's ineffability and the impossibility of comprehending his nature or purposes by means of men's reasoning abilities alone probably reflected the teachings of William of Ockham and other nominalists to which More would have been exposed during his Oxford days. According to this tradition, only through the gift of revelation could mankind have any hope of understanding God and his will for their lives.[37] More firmly believed that God had chosen to reveal himself to and through the Catholic Church and that he had promised that he would never allow that church to fall into error.[38]

More provides several definitions of the church in which he placed such confidence but perhaps the clearest statement occurs in his *Confutation*:

> the very chyrche is…the comon knowen catholyke people, clergy, lay folke, and all, whych what so euer lyuynge be…do stande to gether and agre in the confessyon of one trew catholyke fayth, wyth all olde holy doctours and sayntes, and good Chrysten people besyde that are all redy passed thys fyftene hundred yere byfore, agaynste…all the rable of…erroneous heretykes.[39]

It is important to observe that More's definition of the church does not emphasize its hierarchical nature. Perhaps most interesting is the absence of any reference to the pope. Indeed, in the opening pages of the second part of his *Confutation* More explicitly rejects the idea that when he spoke of "the catholyke chyrche of Cryst that can not erre" he was speaking of the pope.[40] Later, in a letter to Cromwell from

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[36] Richard Marius, "Thomas More's View of the Church," in Louis Schuster, Richard Marius, James Lusardi, and Richard Schoeck, eds., *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More, Vol. 8, Pt. III* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 1272.

[37] Nominalists such as Gabriel Biel argued that God had the power to do anything that does not involve logical contradiction (*de potentia absoluta*), but that he had chosen to do certain things and to establish certain laws, covenants, rituals, etc., which he had revealed to humanity (*de potentia ordinata*). For further discussion, see Heiko Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism, 3rd Ed.* (Durham: Labyrinth Press, 1983), 36–37, 53. The implications of this view for More's understanding of the sacraments and church structure will be discussed later in the present chapter.

[38] More based his confidence in the infallibility of the church's teachings on Jesus' promises in John 16:13 and Matthew 28:20 (Marius, "Thomas More's View of the Church," 1279).

[39] More, *Second Part of the Confutation*, sig. l4v.

[40] Ibid., sig. a1r–v. Contrast More's views on the pope with those of his fellow martyr John Fisher, who was a strong and unwavering advocate of papal authority.

the Tower of London dated March 5, 1534, More would recall that more than a decade earlier he had warned Henry VIII against defending the authority of the pope too adamantly in his *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum*, lest the king one day find himself at odds with the pontiff.[41]

For More, God's promise that the church would not err did not suggest papal infallibility. Rather, as his description above implies, the promise rests with the church as a whole and the "trew catholyke fayth" it preserves and practices. As he expressed his position in another passage, "These truthes had the apostles, the martyrs, the confessours, the holy doctours of Crytis chyrche, and the comen crysten people of euery age."[42] More finds an answer to potential uncertainties regarding doctrine and practice in what he believed to be the consensus of the church and of Christian tradition. While acknowledging the ultimate freedom of God, he concluded that God's revelation of himself and his will to man through his church provides an inerrant guide to orthodox belief and behavior.[43] It is this conviction that made More so passionately committed to his defense of the Catholic Church and that informed his burning hatred of all that the reformers represented to him personally, the reintroduction of uncertainty.

These observations help to explain what both the reformers and subsequent readers of More have perceived to be inconsistencies or tensions within his *oeuvre*. In his pre-Reformation writings More, like other humanists, did not hesitate to criticize the ignorance of priests and the superstition of the people.[44] He was an active defender of

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The most thorough study of Fisher's thought is Richard Rex, *The Theology of John Fisher* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). For more on the roots of the doctrine of papal infallibility see Brian Tierney, *Origins of Papal Infallibility, 1150–1350: A Study on the Concepts of Infallibility, Sovereignty and Tradition in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 1972).

[41] Elizabeth Frances Rogers, ed., *St. Thomas More: Selected Letters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), 212. More's son-in-law William Roper also recalls a similar statement by More [William Roper, *The mirrour of virtue in worldly greatnes. Or The life of Syr Thomas More Knight* (Paris{?}, 1626 <1557>), 112–113].

[42] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. a3r.

[43] Francis Oakley, *The Western Church in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 143.

[44] In a letter to Peter Giles, who along with the author was also a character in the first section of *Utopia*, More responded to a positive critic of the work by suggesting, "he did not read carelessly and hastily, as priests usually read the divine office (those who read it at all), but slowly and laboriously" [David Wootton, ed., *Thomas More's Utopia, With Erasmus's The Sileni of Alcibiades* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1999), 166].

Erasmus, despite the fact that the Dutchman's *Colloquies* questioned the efficacy of pilgrimages and the adoration of images. However, once the Reformation began More's association of truth and certainty with the consensus of Catholic teaching and practice led him to become an unwavering defender of just such elements of contemporary Catholic religious life.[45] This attitude is already evident in the title of More's earliest vernacular refutation of the reformers: *A dyaloge of syr Thomas More knyghte…wheryn be treatyd dyuers maters, as of the veneration & worshyp of ymagys & relyques, prayng to sayntys, & goyng ō pylgymage, wyth many othere thyngys*. A few pages into the work he describes these practices as "maters as beynge in dede very certayne and owte of doute…[but] nethelesse of late by lewd peple put in questyon."[46] Richard Marius has observed that More's emphasis on "common consent" could all too easily become "an infallible authority for custom."[47] As such, More often found himself in a position where he had to explain away with questionable logic clear superstitions or attribute a great subtlety of theological understanding to the average Christian.[48]

Early in the second book of his *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, presented as an imagined conversation between More and a character called the Messenger, More's guest asks what he should do if heretics claim that they are the true church rather than the Catholics. More assures him that throughout history, even in times of intense persecution, there has always been one sure sign of the true church—the proper administration of the sacraments.[49] Tyndale insisted that the sacraments were merely signs that reminded the believer of God's promises.[50] In keeping with traditional Catholic teaching, More rejected this interpretation and argued that the sacraments were an actual conduit for infusing grace into the life of the Christian. He declared, "dyuerse good holy doctours haue tought…that god in the

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[45] The same can be said of Bishop Tunstal of London. In 1529, he wrote to his old friend Erasmus asking him to "alter in his *Colloquies* certain sections dealing with fasting, ceremonies, church ordinances, pilgrimages, and the invocation of saints" because these passages provided fuel to heretics who challenged the teachings of the church [Charles Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstal: Churchman, Scholar, Statesman, Administrator* (London, UK: Longmans, Green and Co., 1938), 125–126].

[46] More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. A1v.

[47] Marius, "Thomas More's View of the Church," 1295.

[48] More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. D8r, B3v.

[49] Ibid., sig. I3r.

[50] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. M1r.

workynge of such clensynge of y^e^ soule, and infusion of grace, useth the sacramentes not as a bare sygne but as an instrument, wyth whyche and by wyche it pleaseth hym to worke them."[51] Against Luther and Tyndale, More also defended the traditional view that there were seven sacraments.[52] All Christians participated in the sacrament of baptism, which was believed to remove the stain of original sin, while the consequences of later sins could be dealt with through confession and absolution. Other sacraments, such as marriage and ordination, related to individuals in specific circumstances or with specific callings. As in the case of his defense of pilgrimages and prayers to saints, More based his confidence in the sacramental system on the perceived consensus of Catholic tradition.[53]

The reformers often condemned the Catholic interpretation of the sacraments because they claimed the sacramental system of the Catholic Church represented a system of works righteousness. A closer reading of More's views on the sacraments and justification reveal this to be an extreme oversimplification of his position. Indeed, More articulated a quite nuanced doctrine of soteriology in which the influence of nominalism is again apparent. In his *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* he declared:

> who hath not bod thē [the people] do wel? And albe yt y^t^ god wyll reward thē for theyr good dedes, yet put not theyr trust ī thē self & theyr own dedes but ī goddys goodness. Who hath not told thē y^t^ they shold as god biddeth thē ī y^e^ gospel y^t^ whā they haue done all y^t^ they cā do, yet say to thē self we be but vnprofitable seruaūts, we haue done but our dutye. These thīges & such other y^e^ chyrch hath always taugh agaynst y^e^ puttyng of a proud trust in our own dedes.[54]

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[51] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. h1r.

[52] More, *Second Part of the Confutation*, sig. O2v. More's first polemical work, his *Responsio ad Lutherum* of 1523, was a defense of Henry VIII's *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum*, which as its title makes clear, was a defense of the seven sacraments against the attacks launched by Luther in his *Babylonian Captivity*. Luther accepted baptism, the Lord's Supper, and absolution (in an altered form). Tyndale would recognize only baptism and the Lord's Supper as having scriptural warrant and he interpreted them in a radically different way than More [William Tyndale, *The exposition of the fyrste Epistle of seynt Jhon with a Prologge before it* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1531), sig. G5r]. Indeed, in declaring the sacraments to be signs rather than conduits of grace, Tyndale was much closer to Zwingli's position than he was to Luther's.

[53] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. e2r.

[54] More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. T3r.

More's "whā they haue done all y^{t} they cā do" reflects the teaching of the nominalists that Christians must do all that they can while trusting in God to make up the difference between man's feeble effort and God's standards of righteousness, a teaching summed up in the phrase "facere quod in se est."[55] He consistently held that good works, of which the sacraments would be the most important, only contribute to man's salvation because God has declared this to be the case. Such good works do not mean that the believer earns or deserves salvation, which More, like the reformers, attributes ultimately "to god and the merytes of Crystes passion."[56]

It is interesting to note that More acknowledged that God could have ordained any number of mechanisms for man's salvation. Indeed, he could even have decided to save men through faith apart from any good works as the reformers taught, although for More this would seem to undermine human morality. However, More ultimately concluded that God had chosen to use the sacraments for this purpose and that he had revealed this decision in scripture and through the teaching and practice of the church. As More explained in the *Confutation*, "god hath from the begynnyng determyned that he wolde after the fall of Adam ordinarily not geue yt [salvation] wythoute the sacramentes."[57] Here we see More acknowledging the contingency introduced by the nominalist position but then reaffirming certainty through an appeal to the consensus of Catholic tradition. As noted at the beginning of this section, the assurance of eternal salvation

[55] On the origins of the phrase *facere quod in se est*, see Oberman, *Harvest of Medieval Theology*, 53, 132–133. More is making a similar point when he argues, "he [God] hath not so sworne nor so promysed neyther, that he wyll saue man without any regarde of good wurks, but hath both promised & sworne the clene contrary, that…we [must] wurke well yf we maye, or repent that we dyd not and be in purpose to do" (More, *Second Part of the Confutation*, sig. b2v).

[56] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. b3r. According to Gabriel Biel's nominalist soteriology, which More appears to echo, God's grace provides the bridge between the *bonitas* and the *dignitas* of human works, thus making the individual worthy of salvation (Oberman, *Harvest of Medieval Theology*, 161).

[57] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. h3r. Several pages earlier he had observed, "Now the chyrche beleueth & techeth that god hath not so bounden hym selfe to his sacramentes, but that where he gyueth the gyfte of faythe to any that can not come to baptysme, there he of hys power maye and of hys goodnes wyll gyue vnto that man the gyfte of such grace to come to heuyn without baptysme" (Ibid., sig. g3v).

ultimately rests for More on one's understanding of the church and confidence in its teachings.[58]

It is only in light of the previous discussion of More's soteriology that it is possible to examine his views on the clergy and the reintroduction of hierarchical complementarity into his thought, a concept not essential to his broader understanding of the nature of the church but nevertheless arrived at in the course of his more general polemical exchange with the reformers. Put simply, More's sacramental theology led him to elevate the status of the clergy who performed them. In his *Obedience of a Christian Man*, Tyndale had rejected the sacrament of ordination because it did not fulfill his definition of a true sacrament, "an holy signe . . . [that] representeth allwaye some promise of God."[59] For More, however, ordination was both itself a sacrament and a prerequisite for the performance of the other sacraments. This position led More to reject as outright heresy the idea "y^{t} euery crysten man and euery crysten woman ys a preste."[60]

More's complete rejection of the priesthood of all believers and the passion of polemic could at times lead him to take a harder line than pre-Reformation Catholic teaching might have required. For example, he refused to countenance Tyndale's assertion—not unprecedented in the Catholic tradition—that laymen and even women could perform the sacraments in certain circumstances when priests were not available.[61] To support this position Tyndale had put forward the hypothetical case of "a woman . . . dreuen alone in to an Ilande where Cryste was neuer preached."[62] Rather than addressing the theological implication of such a situation, certainly not unimaginable in the sixteenth century, More preceded to answer Tyndale by declaring:

> [A]s though thynges that we call chaunce and happe, happened to come so to passe without any prouydence of god. Tyndale may make hym selfe sure, that syth there falleth not a sparrow vppon y^{e} ground wythout our

[58] As in the earlier discussion of the veneration of images, it seems perfectly legitimate to recognize the sophistication of More's theology while at the same time questioning whether his views represent the understanding of the typical layperson or even many priests. The reformers' claims that many Catholics had made idols of the saints and of the Eucharist, while not necessarily applicable to More himself, still required a rebuttal which More did not provide.

[59] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. M1r, M3r.

[60] More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. S1v.

[61] Oberman, *Harvest of Medieval Theology*, 27.

[62] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. s3r.

> father that is in heuen: there shall no woman fall a lande in any so farre an Ilande, where he will haue his name preached and his sacramentes mynystred, but that god can and wyll well inough prouyde a man or twayne to come to lande wyth her.[63]

While Tyndale also clearly recognized the role of providence in the unfolding of human history, he might be excused for finding this reply to his hypothetical situation less than satisfying.

Interestingly, More was willing to acknowledge that God could have chosen to organize his church in fundamentally different ways. He was also willing to acknowledge some developments of church structure across the centuries. In his own words, "[G]od is at hys lyberte styll and euer styll shalbe…to gouerne his chyrche to hys pleasure in dyuerse ages after dyuerse maners."[64] Here More probably had in mind the development of the papacy, with which Tyndale and his associates took such issue. However, although More could imagine a church without a pope, his linking of certainty to the general consensus of the Catholic tradition (and ultimately to the *status quo*) meant that he would remain a staunch defender of the authority of the Catholic hierarchy.[65] It was then only a short step to a privileging of the clergy with regard to the interpretation of God's revealed truth. More's final position in the second part of his *Confutation* that "the clergye of euery age [have] bene that parte of Chrystes very chyrche,

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[63] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. s3r. One should balance statements such as this and their obvious subordination of women to men with the fact that More was actually extremely progressive for his time regarding certain aspects of gender roles and relations, particularly in the education of his daughters. When it came to the temporal regiment, Tyndale revealed himself throughout his writings to be extremely conservative on issues of gender. Although he admonishes husbands to be "curtes [courteous] thefore vnto thē [their wives]" and to "overcome thē with kyndnes" (Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. G2r), he explains earlier in the same book that while Sarah was in some ways equal to Abraham before their marriage, "as sone as she was maryed [she] was in subiecciō and became without cōparison inferior" (Ibid., sig. D3v). However, in the spiritual regiment, Tyndale appears to have imagined a radical equality, even of gender—"father, mother, sonne, doghter, master, servaunte, kynge and subiecte, be names in the worldly regimēte. In Christ we are all one thīge, none better thē other" (Ibid., sig. G1v). For further discussion of the late medieval and Reformation context of Tyndale's views on marriage, see Robert Bast, *Honor Your Fathers: Catechisms and the Emergence of a Patriarchal Ideology in Germany 1400–1600* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 66–92.

[64] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. D1v.

[65] "[E]uery prouynce myghte haue theyr owne chyefe spyrytuall gouernour ouer it selfe, wythout any recourse vnto the pope, or any superyoryte recognysed to any other outwarde person" (More, *Second Part of the Confutation*, sig. A1r).

to whom Chryste specyally spake" represents a strong reaffirmation of the principle of hierarchical complementarity that had long been central to the medieval worldview.[66]

2. *William Tyndale's Understanding of the Church*

In an essay entitled "William Tyndale and the Course of the English Reformation", Patrick Collinson has suggested that "it is impossible to predict what kind of Church of England he [Tyndale] would have constructed or legislated for."[67] This pessimistic conclusion is based on the fact that while some of Tyndale's contemporaries and associates found themselves in positions where they could directly shape the development of the church in England under Henry VIII (Thomas Cranmer) or later under Edward or Elizabeth (Miles Coverdale), Tyndale spent most of his career as an exile whose views were officially condemned by those in power. Nevertheless, through a careful reading of Tyndale's works it is possible to reconstruct a relatively complete picture of how Tyndale envisioned a reformed English church. The doctrine of the two regiments was of central importance in this ecclesiology because the church as an institution manifests itself in both the temporal and spiritual spheres. Despite numerous unresolved tensions evident within his reflections on the church, the consistent tendency of his thought was to undermine the hierarchy that was so fundamental a feature of both the political and religious structures of his time.

Like More, Tyndale provides descriptions and definitions of the church throughout his works without necessarily dealing with the topic systematically. In the opening pages of his *An Answer to More's Dialogue* he acknowledges that the word "church" has "dyuerse significacions."[68] First, it is used to refer to "a place or housse, whether christen people were wont in the olde time to resorte at tymes conuenient, for to heare y^{e} worde of doctrine, the lawe of God and the faith of oure sauioure

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[66] More, *Second Part of the Confutation*, sig. E4r. Interestingly, Tyndale's objections to this conclusion—discussed further in a moment—are already hinted at by More's own creation, the messenger of the *Dialogue*, "[If] the church be all we that shulde as ye say bee by god cōmaunded to beleue the chyrche, And all we to gether make the hole chyrch. And what reasō were yt than to cōmaund vs to beleue the chyrche, whych were no more in effect, but to byd vs all beleue vs all" (More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. G8v).

[67] Collinson, "William Tyndale and the Course of the English Reformation," *Reformation*, Vol. 1 (1996): 72–97.

[68] William Tyndale, *An answere vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge made by Vvillyam Tindale* (Antwerp, Simon Cock, 1531), sig. A5r.

Jhesus christ."[69] Although this particular passage focuses on the church as a place in the past, before the corruptions of his own age, Tyndale never rejected the idea that the church must at one level be identified with a concrete space where people gather together.[70] He would write in 1533, "[W]e must haue a place to come to gether to praye in general, to thāke and to crie to God for the cōmune necessites, as well as to preache the worde of God in."[71] Because he believed that the individual was created by God as "a dowble person," with both a material body and an immaterial soul, he argued that the church must also have both material and spiritual components.[72] The church building is not the church but for Tyndale it is one instance in which the church impinges upon or manifests itself in the temporal regiment.

The fact that Tyndale still conceived of the church in some respects as a place is significant because it provides at least a partial answer to More's criticism that Tyndale's church was "a certayne secrete scattered congregacyon vnknowen to all the worlde."[73] This was a charge frequently leveled against many of the reformers by their Catholic opponents. Indeed, More had made a similar argument against Luther in his earlier Latin work *Responsio ad Lutherum* (1523) when he asserted that Luther's church was unknowable and invisible like the ideas of Plato.[74] Melanchthon would respond to such attacks in his *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* when he declared, "We are not dreaming about some Platonic republic as has been slanderously alleged, but we teach that this Church actually exists, made up of true believers…scattered throughout the world and known by certain

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[69] Tyndale, *An Answer to More's Dialogue*, sig. A5r.

[70] "The churches at the beginnynge were ordeyned that the people shulde thider resorte to here the worde of God there preached only & not for the use where in they now are" [William Tyndale, *That fayth the mother of all good workes iustifieth us* {*Parable of the Wicked Mammon*} (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1528), sig. G4r].

[71] Tyndale, *Exposition upon Matthew V–VII*, sig. i4v.

[72] Ibid., sig. g3v.

[73] More, *Second Part of the Confutation*, sig. A1r. Robert Barnes argued in the first edition of his *Supplication* in 1531, "the churche ys a spiritualle thynge and no exteryor thynge but invisible from carnalle yies (I say not that they be invisible that be of the churche, but that holy chuche in hyr selfe ys invisible)" [Barnes, *Supplication unto Henry VIII* (1531), sig. H4r]. This statement reveals the reformers' understanding that the church was made up of concrete individuals while also pointing to More's deeper concern, the question of identifying which individuals constituted the true church.

[74] John Headley, "Thomas Murner, Thomas More, and the First Expression of More's Ecclesiology," *Studies in the Renaissance*, Vol. 14 (1967): 79.

outward marks, open and visible to the eyes of men."[75] To be sure, in the 1520s and 1530s the reformed church in England or "the Brethren"—as their community was sometimes called—was scattered and was not organized into recognizable parishes with obvious church buildings.[76] In this sense, the church was difficult to see. However, the reformers looked forward to a time when this would not be the case, when believers would gather at their local church to be instructed by godly priests, to hear the scriptures read in English, to increase their faith, and to learn how to live holy lives.[77]

According to Tyndale, when people use the word "church" they may also be referring to "a multitude of shaven shorn and oyled whych we now calle the spirytualtye ād clergye."[78] Tyndale and the other English reformers rejected this identification of the church with the clergy as a corruption of God's original intentions. Robert Barnes decried the fact that the bishops had "by vylence vsurpyd the name off holy churche."[79] In his *Practice of Prelates*, which sought to chart the history of the decline of the church since the time of the apostles, Tyndale presented evidence that the popes had systematically "separated them [the clergy] from the laye in all thinges."[80] It has earlier been observed that Thomas More's definition of the church did not, in its most essential expression, emphasize the identification of the church with the clergy but rather with the church as a whole and the teaching and practices that it legitimated.[81] However, in his need for certainty More ultimately concluded that "the clergye of euery age [have] bene that parte of Chrystes very chyrche, to whom Chryste specyally spake."[82] His belief that salvation and grace were mediated to individual Christians by means of the sacraments and that only priests could perform them further served to reinforce the elevated status of the clergy in his thought.[83]

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[75] Avis, *The Church in the Theology of the Reformers*, 4–5.

[76] Thomas More, *The apologye of syr Thomas More knight* (London, William Rastell, 1533), sig. A2r.

[77] Tyndale, *Exposition upon Matthew V–VII*, sig. i4v.

[78] Tyndale, *An Answer to More's Dialogue*, sig. A5v.

[79] Barnes, *Supplication unto Henry VIII* (1531), sig. H1v.

[80] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. D7r.

[81] More, *Second Part of the Confutation*, sig. l4v.

[82] Ibid., sig. E4r.

[83] As Barnes argued in his *Supplication* of 1534, "I thynke this name churche, was neuer named, but it was taken specially, & principally, for those men, that had shauen crownes, and other lyke tokens" [Robert Barnes, *A supplicacion vnto the most gracious prynce H. the .viii* (London, John Byddell, 1534), sig. M3r].

The English reformers' understanding of the clergy and their role within the church, growing as it did out of their belief in the "priesthood of all believers," was radically different from traditional Catholic teachings. At least at times, More interpreted his opponents to mean that they would do away with the clergy entirely.[84] This was certainly not Tyndale's position. Tyndale consistently held throughout his writings that God had instituted several offices within the church. He explained in *Practice of Prelates*:

> y^e^ apostles folwīg & obeyng y^e^ rule, doctrine & cōmaūdmēt of oure sauiour Jesus Christ…ordened in his kingdome and congregacion two officers: One called after y^e^ greke worde bisshop, in english an ouersear; which same was called preast after y^e^ greke, elder in ēglish…And this ouersear did put his handes vnto the plowe of goddess worde and fed Christes flocke…Another officer they chose and called him Deacon after the greke, a ministre in english, to ministre the almesse of the people vnto the poore and neadye.[85]

Like Luther and Zwingli on the Continent, Tyndale and his fellow reformers retained the idea of the clergy (almost all the leading reformers had been priests or monks). However, their views were far more complex and nuanced than their Catholic critics or modern historians have often seemed to realize.

First, it is interesting to note the almost universal contempt for those at the top of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in the writings of Tyndale and his associates. Like Luther, the English reformers quickly came to view the papacy as a manifestation of antichrist and to condemn the corruption and abuses of the papal office.[86] Indeed, Tyndale would stress that the pope was in actuality only the bishop of the city of Rome who had, over the course of time, usurped the power of other leading churchmen and then of secular rulers as well.[87] The English reformers also subtly

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[84] In his response to Simon Fish's *Supplication of the Beggars*, More asked, "yf y^e^ clergy were caste owte for nought…Who shulde then be…prechours? …Who but some ley Lutheranes?" [Thomas More, *A supplcacyon of soulys made by syr Thomas More knight* (London, William Rastell, 1529), sig. E3r]. Fish's *Supplication of Souls* (1529) was extremely anticlerical and does not present a very developed theology. It is unclear if Fish actually advocated getting rid of all of the existing clergy or if More simply interpreted his statements in this way.

[85] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. B4r–v.

[86] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. C8r; Barnes, *Supplication unto Henry VIII* (1531), sig. H4v.

[87] See the section of Tyndale's *Prelates* entitled "How the Bisshope of Rome became greater then other, and called him self Pope" (Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. B7r–B8r). Richard Rex has shown how after the Act in Restraint of Appeals was passed

undermined the standing of the bishops by the frequent association of contemporary church leaders with the religious authorities that condemned Jesus, the scribes and Pharisees.[88] The reformers had many reasons to be critical of the English bishops. First, and most obviously, was the persecution that the reformers experienced at their hands. In his *Obedience of a Christian Man*, Tyndale complained that the church "persecuteth y^{e} worde of God, and with all wilynes driveth the people from it."[89] Quite often this anger at the bishops was much more personal and direct. Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, who Tyndale described as the "shipwracke of all Englond," was a frequent subject of condemnation both before and after his fall from power in 1529."[90] Tyndale also criticized Bishop Tunstal of London, who had rejected his appeal for patronage of a printed English Bible.[91] Meanwhile, Tyndale's fellow exiles, George Joye and Robert Barnes, had particularly contentious relationships with Bishop Gardiner of Winchester.[92]

The English reformers generalized from these experiences and assigned the bishops a sinister role in a reconstruction of ecclesiological history.[93] This new version of history took as its foundation the doctrine of the two regiments and the belief that in the early church the distinction between the spiritual and temporal spheres was carefully observed. For the reformers, Jesus made the situation clear when he boldly proclaimed in his trial before Pilate that his kingdom was

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in 1533 it became a central component to Henrician propaganda to refer to the pope only as the bishop of Rome [Richard Rex, "The Crisis of Obedience: God's Word and Henry's Reformation," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (1996): 879].

[88] The preface of Tyndale's *Prelates* begins with an extensive comparison of "the olde scribes and pharises…[who] darkened the scripture with their tradicions ād false interpretacions" and "oure scribes and pharises now" (Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. A1v, A3r). For another example see George Joye, *Ortulus anime. The garden of the soule* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1530), sig. D4r.

[89] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. A2v.

[90] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. G4v. Wolsey was also the object of a great deal of criticism in William Roye's and Jerome Barlow's 1528 book of anticlerical rhymes [William Roye and Jerome Barlow, *Rede me and be nott wrothe for I saye no thyne but trothe* (Strasbourg, Johann Schoot, 1528)].

[91] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. K4r.

[92] Charles Butterworth and Allan Chester, *George Joye 1495?–1553: A Chapter in the History of the English Bible and the English Reformation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962), 205–218. For the subsequent development of the Gardiner myth, see Michael Riordan and Alec Ryrie, "Stephen Gardiner and the Making of a Protestant Villain," *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (2003): 1039–1063.

[93] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. B6r–B7r.

not of this world.[94] However, church leaders had not been content with this arrangement and had progressively overstepped the bounds of their offices. The bishops had simultaneously withdrawn themselves from obedience to secular authorities and begun to use violence and compulsion against their enemies, tools that had no place in the spiritual realm.[95] Perhaps more pragmatically, Tyndale also argued that the bishops' involvement in government in the temporal sphere made it practically impossible that they could also fulfill their spiritual duties. He suggested in *Obedience*, "To preach Gods worde is to moch for half a mā. And to minister a tēporall kīgdome is to moch for half a mā also. Ether other requireth an hole man. One therfore can not well doo both."[96]

Tyndale and his associates also attacked the theological justifications for the power and status of the bishops traditionally put forward by the Catholic Church. Among the propositions for which George Joye was accused of heresy in 1527 was "that a simple priest hath as large ād as grete powr to bynde and to lose as hath a bishope or the Bishope of Rome."[97] In other words, to return to Tyndale's discussion of the biblically-instituted church offices in *Practice of Prelates*, the words "priest" and "bishop" were interchangeable and any hierarchical distinction between them was man-made, extrinsic, and applicable only when one spoke of the administration of the church as it manifested itself in the temporal sphere.[98] Reformers also questioned the notion of apostolic succession on which the authority of the bishops was often thought to rest. Thomas Cranmer, although himself the most exalted bishop in England, would later write, "If we shall allow them for the true Church of God, that appear to be the visible and outward church, consisting of the ordinary succession of bishops, then shall we make Christ…to

[94] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. A7r; Graham Maddox suggests that Jesus' statement (Matt. 22:21) is the earliest and purest expression of the doctrine of the two regiments [Graham Maddox, *Religion and the Rise of Democracy* (London: Routledge, 1996), 66].

[95] Tyndale, *Exposition upon Matthew V–VII*, sig. h1v; Fish, *Supplication of the Beggars*, fol. 3r; Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, A8v.

[96] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. G7v.

[97] George Joye, *The letters which Johnn Ashwel Priour of Newnham Abbey…sente secretely to the Bishope of Lyncolne* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1531{?}), sig. A1v.

[98] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. B4r–v.

be the head of ungodly and disobedient members."[99] Finally, it should be noted that throughout most of the writings of the first generation of English reformers it was the local church, the local community of believers, which was of primary concern.

When it came to the more humble clergy, Tyndale's critique was in many ways more sympathetic. He concluded that the average priest was largely ignorant of true Christian teachings.[100] Sometimes this ignorance resulted from insufficient understanding of Latin, the language of the Vulgate and of other major sources of religious knowledge. In a moment of frustration captured in his *Obedience of a Christian Man*, Tyndale implored, "Yf they will not lat the laye mā have the worde of God in his mother tonge, yet let the prestes have it, which for a greate parte of thē doo vnderstōde no latine at all."[101] Tyndale also believed that even priests who had received a more thorough education were often equally ignorant, although in such cases the issue was that the truths of scripture had been obscured.[102] Perhaps reflecting on his own educational experience at Magdalen College, Oxford, Tyndale declared:

> [They] will let no man come there to [scripture], vntyll he have byn two yeres master of arte. first they nosell them in sophistry…and of all maner bokes of Aristotle ād of all maner doctours which they yet never sawe…[and] whē they have this wise brauled viii, x or xii or moo yeres and after that their iudgementes are vtterly corrupte: then they beginne

[99] Avis, *The Church in the Theology of the Reformers*, 64. It was not the entire idea of apostolic succession that the reformers rejected, but rather a simplistic and mechanical understanding of how succession worked. What was important was not the laying on of hands from one generation of bishops to another; it was continuity of true doctrine that demonstrated continuity with the early church and thus legitimacy.

[100] The ignorance of priests was a common complaint among humanists, particularly Erasmus, many of whose works Tyndale had read. As an example, see Erasmus' comments in a letter to Henry Bullock from August 1516 [F.M. Nichols, ed., *The Epistles of Erasmus from his Earliest Letters to his Fifty-First Year Arranged in Order of Time*, Vol. II (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1962), 326]. Such complaints also had precedents in the medieval period. A desire to improve the standards among parish clergy in England motivated John Pecham, Archbishop of Canterbury between 1279 and 1292, to produce an instruction manual entitled *Ignoratia Sacerdotum* (Bast, *Honor Your Fathers*, 21).

[101] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. B6r.

[102] For a detailed discussion of the education of priests before the introduction of seminaries in the second half of the sixteenth century, see John Shinners and William Dohar, eds., *Pastors and the Care of Souls in Medieval England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998).

> their Devinite. Not at the scripture: but every man taketh a sondry doctoure.[103]

Tyndale argued that this extended educational process actually made it far more difficult for priests to understand the simple truths of the Bible. In his more paranoid moments Tyndale even imagined a complicated plot by those at the top of the ecclesiastical hierarchy to keep scripture out of the hands of those further down, bishops hiding the truth from priests while abbots hid it from their monks.[104]

In reality, the primary function of the clergy according to the reformers should be to read and expound the Word of God to the people. The clergy were not ontologically distinct from laymen. As we have already seen, Tyndale rejected any understanding of the sacraments that necessitated a distinct, ordained clergy. Another practical manifestation of the reformers' belief that the clergy were not entirely distinct from the laity was their insistence that priests ought to marry. In *Obedience of a Christian Man*, Tyndale appealed to the Pastoral Epistles concluding that a priest must have a wife for at least two reasons—because the potential priest "is vnapte for so chargeable an office which had never housholde to rule" and "chastite is an exceadinge selden gfyte and vnchastyte exceadinge perelous for that degree."[105] Robert Barnes devoted an entire section of his *Supplication* of 1534 to the proposition that "By Gods worde it is laufull to prestes, that hath not the gyfte of chastite, to mary wyues."[106] In addition to the arguments already put forward by Tyndale, Barnes observed that few Catholic priests were actually celibate and that bishops had made a fortune selling dispensations for concubines and by legitimating clerical bastards.[107] In a seemingly contradictory vein, he warned that clerical celibacy could eventually lead to a depopulation of the country.[108]

The early English reformers believed that the clergy were merely officers and although they had an important and honorable office, it was no more inherently holy than any other office a man might fill in

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[103] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. C2v.
[104] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. E8r–v.
[105] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. J7v.
[106] Barnes, *Supplication unto Henry VIII* (1534), sig. Q2r.
[107] Ibid., sig. T4r.
[108] Ibid., sig. X2v; Simon Fish also dealt with this aspect of the issue, asking "whate an infinite nombre of people might haue bē encreased to haue peopled the realme if these sort of folke had bē maried like other men?" (Fish, *Supplication of the Beggars*, fol. 4v).

the temporal regiment.[109] Indeed, Tyndale argued that the clergy have no unique access to the divine presence and that "as good is the prayer of a cobler as of a Cardinall . . . and the blessinge of a baker . . . is as good as the blessinge of oure most holy father the Pope."[110] Like Luther, the English reformers glorified the calling of the average believer to a life of activity out in the world.[111] Nevertheless, because life in the temporal regiment was often so time-consuming, it made sense that certain individuals were selected to dedicate themselves completely to studying and expounding the scriptures.[112] The clergy thus served as an important resource for the community. In his preface to the *Great Bible* of 1540, Archbishop Cranmer counseled Christians to read the scripture for themselves. However, if he or she could not understand a passage, the layperson should "[g]o to thy curate and preacher, [and] shewe thy selfe to be desirous to knowe and learne."[113] In order that they might dedicate themselves to their important task, Tyndale and the other English reformers argued that priests ought to be supported financially by the local community.[114] In *Wicked Mammon*, Tyndale declared, "the curates which in every parish preach y^{e} Gospell ought of duety to receave an honest living for thē & theyr howsholdes."[115] As with the Levitical priests in the Old Testament, the tithes should be used to support these ministers, as well as for charitable works in the community.[116]

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[109] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. M3r.

[110] Ibid., sig. M4v–M5r.

[111] "In all the worlde there is not a more Christen life, nether more accordant vnto the Gospell, then is the life of comune Citesins or housholders" [Simon Fish, trans., (Henricus Bomelius) *The summe of the holye scripture and ordinarye of the Christen teaching* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser{?}, 1529), sig. M4r].

[112] In *Obedience*, Tyndale rejected the charge that he held that "no man [should] teach a nother, but that every man take the scripture & lerne by hymselfe" (Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. C1v). Instead, he compared the relationship between the priest and the average believer to that between a master and his apprentice, the more experienced individual teaching the less experienced—"evē so will I that ye teach the people Gods lawe" (Ibid., sig. C1v).

[113] Thomas Cranmer, *The Byble in Englyshe, that is to saye the contēt of al the holy scrypture, both of ye[the] olde, and newe testamēt, with a prologue therinto, made by the reuerende father in God, Thomas archbishop of Cantorbury* (London, Edward Whitchurch, 1540), sig. ⅋2r.

[114] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. G7v.

[115] Tyndale, *Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, sig. f4v.

[116] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. B7r. According to Tyndale, responsibility for administering the tithe and thus the salary of the priests lay not with the clergy themselves but with the church wardens (Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. K3r).

However, in the event that the priests ceased to perform their intended function the individual Christian could and must take responsibility for his or her own spiritual instruction and development. The reformers believed that they were living under just such circumstances—"Never y^e^ lesse, seinge that ye will not teach, yf any man thyrste for the trueth, & reade the scripture by hym selfe…God for his truethes sake will & must teach hym."[117] Tyndale's vesting of the power in the individual believer to correct the local clergy or even to perform their spiritual functions when necessary, combined with the assertion that lay church wardens should administer the finances of the church, points to a nascent congregationalism implicit in Tyndale's ecclesiology. The almost complete absence of discussion of the broader ecclesiastical structure of the Church of England as a whole also points in this direction.[118] These aspects of his thought also suggest that for Tyndale the distinct status of the clergy was in many ways a concession to the realities of the temporal regiment.

Insofar as the priests were individuals living in the temporal regiment, fulfilling a public and institutional role, and vested with property, they were subject to the authority of secular rulers. For example, Tyndale rejected any notion of clerical exemption from secular courts. Indeed, he suggests that the clergy, who ought to be "the light & an example of good lyvinge vnto all other," would be acting at odds with their calling if they sought to evade punishment when they violated the law of the land.[119] Neither were they exempt from contributing financially to the support of the realm. Had not Jesus himself instructed his disciples to render unto Caesar that which was Caesar's?[120] The fact that the priest was an individual tasked with furthering the spiritual

[117] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. C1v.

[118] Tyndale never developed a detailed congregationalist position, although it seems undeniable that later Puritans critical of the Elizabethan ecclesiastical settlement and its episcopal hierarchy would have found much to support their positions in Tyndale's writings.

[119] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. E1r.

[120] William of Ockham had made similar arguments in his writings in the fourteenth century in the context of a struggle between Pope John XXII and Ludwig of Bavaria [Joan Lockwood O'Donovan, *Theology of Law and Authority in the English Reformation* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 19]. The extent to which secular authorities could intervene in and legislate concerning the affairs of the church would continue to be a point of heated debate throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Tyndale's views on this subject will be considered at greater length in a subsequent chapter.

development of his flock but that he did so in the context of a public office introduced inevitable tensions into Tyndale's thought given his efforts to maintain the profound separation between the two regiments. On one hand, he believed it was not the role of the monarch to choose the clergy, something that Tyndale usually seems to have imagined the local congregation doing. On the other, the secular authorities could legitimately legislate regarding the external trappings of the church as it manifested itself in the temporal sphere, particularly with regard to its property.[121]

If the appropriate involvement of the state in the affairs of the church was complex and required constant vigilance if roles were not to become confused, the role of the clergy in secular affairs was equally subject to potential abuse. The early English reformers denied any coercive power to the clergy. In his appeal to Henry VIII, Robert Barnes argued, "the trew preacher . . . intendeth to mayntayne nothinge but the worde of god and that with suffering persecucion (as y^{e} nature of the worde ys) and not wyth persecuting."[122] Likewise, in *Practice of Prelates* Tyndale followed Luther in contrasting the nature of authority in the secular sphere, which "rule[s] ouer y^{e} body with violēce and compel it whether the harte will or not," to authority in the spiritual realm, which uses love and persuasion.[123] Indeed, he argued that any compulsion by the clergy is actually counterproductive and engenders only outward conformity and a false confidence in works righteousness.

However, this did not mean that the clergy should avoid any involvement in the secular sphere or that they should remain entirely passive. Although they could not compel obedience and were allowed to engage in only passive resistance to persecution, they nevertheless had an important role to play as admonishers both of their congregations and of secular rulers, even the king.[124] To make this point in the

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[121] The obvious complexities involved in untangling the legitimate sphere of influence of the state in matters concerning the church was made even more difficult by the traditional role of bishops as it had evolved in sixteenth-century England. Given their wealth and the secular administrative duties often delegated to them by the crown, the episcopacy seemed to Tyndale to have hopelessly confused the two regiments. This may help to explain Tyndale's criticisms of the bishops and his failure to envision a role for higher church officials in his ecclesiology.

[122] Barnes, *Supplication unto Henry VIII* (1531), sig. A3v.

[123] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. B1v.

[124] "[T]he kynge is as depe vnder the spyrituall offycer, to heare out of Godes worde what he ought to beleue and how to lyue, and how to rule, as is the poorest bedger in the realme . . . dampnable it is for the kynge to withdraw him selfe from the obedy-

opening pages of *Prelates*, Tyndale evoked the example of Elijah who boldly challenged the evil King Ahab.[125] Given the frequent appeals of the reformers to Old Testament precedents such as the prophetic ministry of Elijah, Torrance Kirby calls this responsibility to admonish the "prophetical office."[126] The prophetic role of the clergy also introduced potential difficulties into Tyndale's ecclesiology. Richard Duerden even suggests that Tyndale and Luther appear to violate their own separation of the two regiments when they involve themselves rhetorically in worldly affairs and issues.[127] However, they would have argued that the prophetic mantle implied no claim to actual political office and thus preserved the fundamental separation between the two spheres. More problematic for the reformers were efforts to link this charismatic authority of the prophet with the institutionalized role of the priestly office, particularly after a reformed church structure had been instituted and they had a vested interest in its preservation.[128]

3. *The "pure worde of god" or "vnwritten verities": Scripture and Tradition As Competing Sources of Authority*

For Tyndale, any authority the priest may have arises not from his office as such, but from the application of revealed biblical truths to situations in the contemporary world. However, according to Tyndale and the other early English reformers, the layperson also enjoyed (or should enjoy) direct access to the scriptures and their authority. It was this unmediated access to the Bible in the language of the people that served as the basis for Tyndale's radical leveling of older ecclesiological

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ence of the spyrituall offycer; that is to saye, from hearynge his dutye, to do it, and from hearynge his vyces rebuked, to amende them" (Tyndale, *Exposition of Matthew V–VII*, sig. h1v).

[125] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. A5v.

[126] W.J. Torrance Kirby, *The Zurich Connection and Tudor Political Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 26. As his title suggests, Kirby roots this prophetic office primarily in the writings of the Swiss reformers who began to exert a strong influence in England during the reign of Edward VI. The impact of Tyndale's writings several decades earlier should not, however, be underestimated.

[127] Richard Duerden, "The Temporal and Spiritual Kingdoms: Tyndale's Doctrine and Practice," *Reformation*, Vol. 1 (1996): 118–128.

[128] For further discussion of both the possibilities and limitations of the association of pastors with the prophets of the Old Testament, see Robert Bast, "Constructing Protestant Identity: The Pastor as Prophet in Reformation Zurich," in Gudrun Litz, Heidrun Munzert, and Roland Liebenberg, eds., *Frömmigkeit—Theologie—Frömmigkeitstheologie Contributions to European Church History* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 351–362.

hierarchies. In his *Confutation*, More called Tyndale and his associates "coũterfayte euangelycalls," suggesting that they spuriously based their heretical views on misreadings or misrepresentations of scripture.[129] Stripped of the pejorative adjective, Tyndale would proudly have accepted this designation as an evangelical.[130] He instructed his readers, "Beleve no thinge excepte that Gods word beare reacord that it is true."[131] As we have seen, Tyndale mercilessly applied this principle to the established church of his day and rejected both teachings and practices for which he could find no scriptural warrant, including five of the traditional sacraments and the belief that clergy should remain celibate. He also encouraged readers to evaluate his own writings in the same way.[132] It is important to note that his position assumes the circulation of Tyndale's vernacular translations of scripture, for only with access to an affordable English Bible could the average man or woman follow his advice.

More's approach to scripture and his understanding of its place in the life of the church and the individual believer was fundamentally different from that of Tyndale. Like Tyndale, he recognized the Bible as a primary source of God's revelation to humanity. Throughout his various writings, More appealed repeatedly to the authority of scripture in his arguments with the reformers. Nevertheless, he always subordinated the written word of scripture to the orally transmitted teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church, which he believed legitimated both the Bible itself and its correct interpretation.[133] As Tyndale expressed the situation, their disagreement came down to which was the ultimate source of religious truth, the "pure worde of God" as the reformers believed or the "vnwritten verities" of More.[134]

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[129] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. Dd2v.

[130] See note 11 above.

[131] Tyndale, *Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, sig. J5r.

[132] "Who so ever therfore readest thys, cõpare it vnto the scripture… Iff gods worde condemne it then hold it accursed" (Tyndale, *Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, sig. A5r).

[133] Tyndale represents what Heiko Oberman has termed "Tradition I" while More represents "Tradition II" in Oberman's extensive discussion of medieval debates over the connections between and relative worth of scripture and oral tradition. Oberman sums up Gabriel Biel's position, which would later be echoed by both Thomas More and the Council of Trent, "Tradition is the *authoritative vehicle of divine truth*, embedded in Scripture but overflowing in extrascriptural apostolic Tradition" (Oberman, *Harvest of Medieval Theology*, 365–393, 406).

[134] Tyndale, *Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, sig. A6v; Tyndale, *Exposition upon Matthew V–VII*, sig. l6v. For additional discussion, see Peter Marshall, "The Debate

In addition to this fundamental divergence, the two men also differed in their views regarding the capacity of average believers to properly understand scripture when offered the chance to read it for themselves.

More argued that not everything necessary for the Christian to believe could be found in scripture.[135] Indeed, did not Tyndale's own translation preserve the statement in John 20 that many things said and done by Jesus had not been written down?[136] More was quick to point out that even the stories and teachings preserved in scripture had once been unwritten traditions. He observed, "chryst left neuer a boke be hynde hym of hys owne makynge as Moyses did and the profytis."[137] Going back even further in sacred history, More argued that God had spoken to men in the Old Testament long before Moses began to write the earliest books of scripture. Several times, More recalled the famous dictum of St. Augustine, who "sayed and affirmed playnely that hym self sholde not haue byleued the gospel, but yf the authoryte of the catholyke chyrche compelled hym thereunto."[138] In other words, without the Church, men would not have the scriptures nor would they recognize them as such. More even denied that Tyndale's various English translations could claim the title of scripture at all because they had not been recognized by the Catholic hierarchy. He declared, "who so callith y^{t} new testamēt calleth it by a wrōg name, except they wyl call yt Tyndals testament or Luthers testament. for so had tyndall after Luthers coūsayle corrupted & chaūged yt frō the good & holsō doctrine of Criste."[139]

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over 'Unwritten Verities' in Early Reformation England," in Bruce Gordon, ed., *Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe, Vol. I: The Medieval Inheritance* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996).

[135] Consider Biel's similar statement a century earlier, "many other things that have most certainly to be believed and done are not mentioned in the Bible" (Oberman, *Harvest of Medieval Theology*, 399).

[136] William Tyndale, {*New Testament*} (Worms, Peter Schoeffer, 1526), sig. V1r.

[137] More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. E4v.

[138] More, *Second Part of the Confutation*, sig. N1r. Tyndale acidly replied that Augustine, a pagan at the time to which he referred in this statement, was drawn to the church by the holy living of Christians and that "if we shall not beleue tyll the liuynge of the spiritualtie converte vs, we belike to byde long ynough in vnbeleffe" (Tyndale, *An Answer to More's Dialogue*, sig. D5r). I have discussed both men's use of Augustine more fully in an entry entitled "Tyndale" in the forthcoming collection *The Historical Reception of Augustine* (Oxford University Press).

[139] More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. O3v.

In his *Confutation*, More made his position clear when he declared, "no man sayth that any man is aboue the worde of god but we saye boldely that hys worde vnwryten is egall and as stronge as hys worde wryten."[140] More's statement might seem to suggest that these two sources are equally valid avenues to religious truth. A closer examination, however, reveals that More always viewed the Bible as playing a subordinate role. More was even willing to imagine a church without scripture, "I nothynge dowt but…had ytt so beene that neuer gospel had bene written yet shoulde the substaunce of thys faythe neuer haue fallen oute of chrysten folkys hartys."[141] This was anathema to the reformers, to whom the doctrine of *sola scriptura* remained paramount.

Beyond his subordination of written to unwritten traditions, More also denied that the average Christian should have unfettered access to the Bible. This was certainly nothing new. Since the twelfth century, lay interpretation of the Word had frequently been associated with heretical tendencies. Around the time of the Third Lateran Council (1179), Alexander III had declared that the scriptures were not "for all men in all places."[142] In keeping with this tradition, More argued that the Bible contained many difficult passages and that misinterpretation could lead into deadly errors. As enumerated in his *Confutation*, these difficult sections included among others "the gospel of saynte John…the apocalyps…[and] y^{e} pystles of saynt Poule."[143] These observations merely reaffirmed his earlier statements in his *Dialogue* when he proposed the possibility of an orthodox Catholic translation. He suggested that all copies would be kept in the possession of the bishop, who would lend it to those who are "by hym thought and reputed for suche as shall be likely to vse yt to goddys honour."[144] Even then, More doubted that the bishop would "fynde many a man, to whom he myght cōmyt all the hole."[145] Given that so much of the Bible does

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[140] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. l3r. Richard Marius suggests that More's legal training and "the sanctity of old tradition on which the common law of England and law in general was assumed to rest" may have contributed to his willingness to place such value on unwritten tradition [Richard Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 33].

[141] More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. G1r.

[142] Fernández-Armesto, *Reformations: A Radical Interpretation*, 38.

[143] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. R3v.

[144] More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. R3r.

[145] Ibid., sig. R4r. As in the *Confutation*, More suggests the synoptic Gospels as appropriate reading material for the laity but certainly not the book of Romans from

not "agre wyth theyr capacytees," better he thought for laymen simply to follow the teachings of the Catholic Church, which could not err in matters of faith.[146]

The English reformers' extremely negative view of the Catholic Church and much of its history made it impossible for them to accept the Catholic hierarchy as a reliable source of religious truth and biblical interpretation. Tyndale declared that More's "vnwritten verities" were "as true and as authenticke as his stories of Vtopia"—in other words, that they were pure fabrications.[147] There was a general consensus among the reformers that there could be only one reason why their opponents demanded submissive obedience while working aggressively to keep the Bible out of laymen's hands. As Tyndale put it in *Obedience of a Christian Man*, "I can imagen no cause veryly excepte it be that we shulde not se the worke of Antychrist and iugulynge of ypocrites."[148]

Tyndale also fundamentally disagreed with More on the capacity of average Christians to interpret scripture for themselves. To be sure, some passages in isolation are difficult to interpret. However, he believed such cases were unusual and that the correct interpretation could be discovered by anyone who read the scriptures in their entirety. As he explained in the preface to his Worms *New Testament* of 1526, "Marke the playne ād manifest places of the scriptures and in

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which the reformers drew many of their theological insights and which Tyndale called the "the principal and most excellent part off the newe testament," suggesting that "every christen man not only knoew it by roote ād with oute the boke, but also exercice hym sylfe therein evermore cōtinually" [William Tyndale, *A compendious introduccion/prologe or preface vn to the pistle off Paul to the Romayns* (Worms, Peter Schoeffer, 1526), sig. a2r]. As on several other occasions, the fictional messenger's response to More in the *Dialogue* rings true—"By my trouth quod he…the people wolde grudge to haue yt on thys wyse delyuered theym at the bysshops hand, and had leuer paye for yt to the prenter thā haue yt of y^{e} bysshop fre" (Ibid., sig. R3v).

146 More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. Q6v.

147 Tyndale, *Exposition upon Matthew V–VII*, sig. l6v. Also consider George Joye's statement that the believer must trust in God's Word and beware of "them that wolde obtrude & thrust yn to the chirche of God any vnwryten verities strange doctryne, euen the doctrine of lying men" [George Joye, *Jeremy the Prophete, translated into Englisshe* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser{?}, 1534), sig. A3r].

148 Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. B4v; Miles Coverdale, *BIBLIA The Bible, that is, the holy Scripture of the Olde and New Testament, faithfully and truly translated out of Douche and Latyn in to Englishe* (Antwerp{?}, 1535), sig. ╬2v; Fish, *Supplication of the Beggars*, fol. 6v.

doutfull places se thou adde no interpretaciō contrary to them."[149] The fundamental assumption that laymen, perhaps with occasional guidance from the clergy, could read and understand scripture in their own language lay behind the production of the hundreds of editions of vernacular Bibles in the sixteenth century.[150] In a statement that echoes Tyndale, the fiery Scottish reformer John Knox would later declare, "if there appear any obscurity in one place, the Holy Ghost which is never contrarious to Himself, explains the same more clearly in other places: so that there can remain no doubt, but unto such as obstinately remain ignorant."[151]

For Tyndale, it was not that scripture was inherently difficult to understand. Rather, he argued that its true meaning had been obscured by hundreds of years of faulty exposition at the hands of the Catholic Church. Indeed, he equated the situation in his own time to the situation in first-century Israel. He begins *Practice of Prelates* with the following statement:

> When the olde scribes and pharises had darkened the scripture with their tradicions ād false interpretacions & wyked persuasions of fleshlye wisdome & shutte vp the kingdome of heauen whiche is goddess worde…christ and Jhon the Baptist…restored the scripture agayne vnto the true vnderstondinge…and confounded their false interpretacions with the cleare and evident textes.[152]

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[149] Tyndale, *New Testament* (1526), sig. Tt1v. Tyndale's exegetical approach and his emphasis on the literal sense will be examined more fully in the next chapter in relation to a broader discussion of the implications of printed vernacular Bibles as a material medium.

[150] See the discussion of Thomas Cranmer's preface to the 1540 edition of the *Great Bible* in the final chapter of the present study.

[151] Quoted in Christopher Morris, *Political Thought in England: Tyndale to Hooker* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 33. Knox's reference to the work of the Holy Spirit raises important questions. Indeed, here we find yet another tension in Protestant thought and in Tyndale's writings particularly. While he often seems to suggest that any reader can correctly interpret scripture, at other times he emphasizes that it is actually the Holy Spirit who makes such understanding possible—"where he [the Spirit] is not there is not y^{e} vnderstondinge of the scripture" (Tyndale, *Wicked Mammon*, sig. E7r). Tyndale believed that only true Christians, the elect saved by faith in Christ's redeeming work, experience the indwelling of the Spirit. However, despite the fact that the elect would almost always be a minority in any community, it was still necessary for the Word to be proclaimed publicly so that all people would have the opportunity to respond. For further discussion of the complexities of Tyndale's position, see James Simpson, *Burning to Read: English Fundamentalism and Its Reformation Opponents* (Cambridge: Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 2007).

[152] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. A1v. In his *Compendius Introduction*, he argued that Paul's letter to the Romans had been "hetherto evyll darkened with glooses and

Articulating the same idea in another form, this time borrowed from Erasmus, Tyndale recalled the story from Genesis 26 where the "y^{e} ēvious Philistenes stopped y^{e} welles of Abraham."[153] In the same way he argued that scripture, the original source of religious truth (in humanist terms, the *fontes*), had been muddied and needed to be restored. Although both Tyndale and More were strongly influenced by Erasmus, when it came to their understanding of scripture Tyndale's position was much more in step with the Dutch humanist's views as expressed in his *Paraclesis*.

The vernacular translations Tyndale produced during his short career, as well as his various polemical and exegetical works, were all contributions to the important enterprise of making the Bible available to the laity. Indeed, Tyndale was so certain of the power of the Word to save and transform its readers that in May of 1531 he told Cromwell's agent Stephen Vaughan:

> if it wolde stande withe the kinges most gracious pleas[ure] to graunte only a bare text of the scriptures to be put forthe emonge h[is] people… of what perso[n] soeuer shall please his magestie, I shall ymedyately make faithful[l] promyse, neuer to wryte more, ne abide ij. dayes in these parties after th[e] same, but ymedyatly to repayre into his realme, and there most humbly submytt my selfe at the fete of his roiall magestie, offerynge my bodye, to suffer what payne or torture, ye what dethe his grac[e] will.[154]

In contrast, it is no surprise that the Catholic English Bible that More imagined in his *Dialogue* of 1529 would not be produced until Elizabeth's reign (Rheims New Testament, 1582) when it was recognized that such a text had become necessary in the Jesuits' mission to regain England for the Catholic Church.[155]

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wonderfull dreames of sophisters, that no man cowde spye oute the entente and meaning off it, which neverthelesse of it sylfe, is a bryghte lyghte" (Tyndale, *Compendius Introduction*, sig. A2r).

[153] For the original context of this image in Erasmus' *Enchiridion* (which Tyndale had earlier translated into English), see John O'Malley, *Collected Works of Erasmus: Spiritualia, Enchiridion, De Contemptu Mundi, de Vidua Christiana* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 4. Tyndale used variations of this phrase throughout his writings [Tyndale, *Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, sig. A7v; Tyndale, *The prophete Ionas with an introducciō before teachinge to vnderstōde him and the right vse of all the scripture* (Antwerp, 1531{?}), sig. A2r].

[154] Alfred Pollard, ed., *Records of the English Bible: The Documents Relating to the Translation and Publication of the Bible in English, 1525–1611* (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 1911), 170–171.

[155] The Rheims New Testament of 1582 was translated from the Latin Vulgate. A letter written by Cardinal Allan in September 1578 notes that the Jesuits had begun to

III. *Conclusion: Tensions in More's and Tyndale's Positions and the Implications of Their Ecclesiologies*

At times, the conflict between Tyndale and More could be quite personal. Tyndale accused More of sacrificing his earlier spirit of humanist reform to his own greed, while More argued that Tyndale's attacks on the church were motivated by his lustful desire to marry, even though he had been ordained to the priesthood.[156] At its root, however, their disagreement was theological. At the same time, neither recognized the common intellectual and religious influences and preoccupations that underlay their seemingly contradictory positions. Despite their similar humanist training, both Tyndale and More had a fairly dim view of the capacities of man's reason when it came to spiritual matters. Both sought a source of authority sufficient to reestablish certainty, particularly with regard to man's salvation. However, they found this certainty in fundamentally different places.

For More, authority ultimately lay in the teachings and the consensus of the Catholic Church, shepherded by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The truths of revelation held by "the apostles, the martyrs, the confessours, the holy doctours of Crytis chyrche, and the comen crysten people of euery age," while seemingly grounded in the shared belief of countless individuals, ultimately created for More a weight of tradition that overrides the individual conscience and compels belief and conformity.[157] This was a conformity for which More, often remembered as the martyr of conscience, was willing to die. For Tyndale, certainty came only through the words of scripture speaking directly to the particular believer. As such, Tyndale's church was always a church of individuals, "a congregaciō, a multitude or a cōpany gathered to gether…the whole multytude of all them that receaue the name

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practice preaching in English and quoting the scriptures in English because, "[in] this respect the heretics, however ignorant they may be in other points, have the advantage over many of the more learned Catholics" (Pollard, *Records of the English Bibles*, 33–34). However, these English Bibles were only to be used by missionary priests. The Catholic Church remained committed to the principle that laymen should have only restricted access to the Word in their own tongue. For example, in 1713 Jansenist appeals for lay reading of vernacular scripture in France were condemned by Clement VI in the bull *Unigenitus* as "seditious, impious, blasphemous,…and savouring of heresy" (Fernández-Armesto, *Reformations: A Radical Interpretation*, 44–45).

[156] Tyndale, *An Answer to More's Dialogue*, fol. 87r; More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. P3v.

[157] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. a3r.

of christe to beleue in him, and not…the clergye onlye."[158] While both men acknowledged that the church was made up of individual Christians, the relationship of the individual to the collective whole was radically different.

Neither position was without its difficulties. Both men struggled to work out the full implications of their views in a systematic way and the pressures of polemical exchange certainly did not help. In More's case, the "infallible authority of custom" ultimately led him to defend beliefs and practices in his polemical works that he had criticized in his earlier humanist writings.[159] It should also be observed that More's defense of unwritten traditions may have blinded him to the obviously complex relationship between the written and unwritten word in the history of Christianity. While he was correct to observe that even the scriptures began as oral tradition, he was never able to demonstrate the existence of a pristine unwritten tradition handed down from the age of the early church to his own time.[160] Instead, he appeals in almost every case to texts, often to the writings of the church fathers and even to the words of scripture itself. More's statement late in the *Confutation* that "other wyse then by bokes can we not knowe what the people byleued a thousand yere ago" goes a long way towards undermining his whole defense of unwritten tradition and its unanimity across the ages.[161]

On the other hand, Tyndale's emphasis on the exclusivity of the written word of scripture would seem to drastically circumscribe God's ability to speak to the believer. Had not God spoken directly to the prophets to whom Tyndale so often appealed, unmediated by the priestly caste certainly, but also by the written word? In addition, Tyndale was clearly not immune to the influence of hundreds of years of developing Christian teaching and tradition. For example, he continued to believe in the perpetual virginity of Mary despite the fact that he could offer no scriptural basis for this doctrine.[162] Finally, despite the fact that Tyndale remained committed to the profound separation

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[158] Tyndale, *An Answer to More's Dialogue*, sig. A6r.
[159] Marius, "Thomas More's View of the Church," 1295.
[160] More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. E4v.
[161] More, *Second Part of the Confutation*, sig. R3v.
[162] More was happy to point out this inconsistency in Tyndale's position (More, *Second Part of the Confutation*, sig. K4v). Peter Marshall has noted that the nearly universal acceptance of this doctrine by the reformers was a constant talking point of their conservative critics (Marshall, "Debate over 'Unwritten Verities'," 65).

of the temporal and spiritual regiments, he was never able to work out exactly how that separation could be maintained in practice given the messy realities of a church that manifests itself in both spheres. There was also a tension inherent in Tyndale's soteriology, which distinguished between the minority of true believers who will respond in faith—"Christ calleth thē…a litle flocke"—and the majority who are part of the church only as an institution in the temporal realm.[163]

Despite these unresolved issues and tensions, one thing remains clear. Thomas More's views of the church and of scripture ultimately reaffirmed the principle of hierarchical complementarity central to medieval conceptions of church and state while William Tyndale's views undermined that principle, at least in the spiritual realm. Ultimately, their two positions were irreconcilable and any possibility of resolution was impossible because they lacked a mutually acknowledged authority to which they could appeal.[164] The extent to which their audiences found their arguments persuasive probably also often depended on the authority (scripture or the Catholic Church) against which they were judged. In the next chapter, we will consider some other factors, particularly the implications of the medium of vernacular print, on how Tyndale's and More's words were disseminated and received.

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[163] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. C6r–v.

[164] Thus the same dynamic was at play that Thomas Kuhn has explored in his work on the nature of scientific revolutions [Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 2nd Ed.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 94].

CHAPTER THREE

IMPLICATIONS OF MEDIA: HOW VERNACULARIZATION AND PRINTING SHAPED THE CONTENT AND RECEPTION OF THE WRITINGS OF WILLIAM TYNDALE AND THOMAS MORE

I. *The Battle of Ideas in the Theater of Material Production*

In his *Ecclesiastical Memorials* the eighteenth-century archivist John Strype reprinted a fascinating story from the register of Bishop Cuthbert Tunstal of London. In April of 1528, the bishop questioned the Lollard John Tyball concerning a series of heretical positions he had espoused, among others that clergy should marry, that pilgrimages were not meritorious, and that saints did not intercede for their petitioners.[1] In addition to subversive ideas, it was also discovered that Tyball possessed subversive books, among them William Tyndale's New Testament. Tyball confessed to Tunstal:

> [A]t Mychaelmasse last past…this respondent and Thomas Hilles came to London to Frear Barons [Robert Barnes], then being at the Freers Augustines in London, to buy a New Testament in Englishe, as he saythe. And they found the sayd Freer Barons in his chamber…this respondent shewyd the Frear Barons certayne old bookes [hand-written Lollard texts] that they had: as of iiii. Evangelistes, and certayne Epistles of Peter and Poule in Englishe. Which bookes the sayd Frear dyd little regard…and sayd, A poynt for them, for they be not to be regarded toward the new printed Testament in Englishe…then the sayd Frear Barons delyverid to them the sayd New Testament.[2]

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[1] John Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials, relating chiefly to religion, and the reformation of it, and the emergence of the Church of England, under King Henry VIII. King Edward VI. And Queen Mary I: Appendix: Containing Records, Letters, and other Original Writings, Referred to in the Memorials under the reign of King Henry VIII* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1822), Vol. I, Pt. II, 50–56. For more on the uses and limitations of Strype as a source see W.D.J. Cargill Thompson, "John Strype as a Source for the Study of Sixteenth-Century English Church History," in Thompson, *Studies in the Reformation: Luther to Hooker* (London: Athlone Press, 1980), 192–201.

[2] Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, Vol. I, Pt. II, 54–55.

At the time of this transaction, Robert Barnes, formerly prior of the Augustinians in Cambridge, was already under house arrest in the London establishment of his own order because of accusations of heresy stemming from a sermon he had preached several years earlier. Before Tunstal could take any action in response to this latest heretical activity, Barnes would stage a daring escape and flee to the Continent where he spent time with Martin Luther at Wittenberg and became an important contributor to the English literary campaign of which Tyndale's books of the 1520s represented the earliest manifestation.

Thus far the focus of this study has been the theological content of the debates between William Tyndale and Thomas More. However, religious debates are never simply a battle of ideas; to be meaningful, ideas have to be conveyed to others. Indeed, what made the Reformation of the sixteenth century so explosive was the unprecedented extent to which revolutionary ideas were disseminated to the masses. In an age when the vast majority of the population was illiterate, great efforts were made to convey religious teachings verbally (for example, through sermons) or visually (through images or drama).[3] However, the arguments of More and Tyndale were primarily textually mediated.[4] In the encounter of Barnes and Tyball we see the clearly perceived break that Tyndale's printed vernacular Bibles represented to many of his contemporaries. Roger Chartier has correctly stressed the importance of recognizing "the effects of meaning that material forms produce" and this chapter will explore the profound implications of the medium of the printed vernacular text for both the content and course of the conflict between Tyndale and More.[5] Some of these implications were already recognized and discussed by the two polemicists themselves, while others have yet to be considered in sufficient detail even by modern scholars. As we shall see, the realities

[3] For further examination of various means of disseminating religious ideas see Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[4] Michel Warner, in his work *Publics and Counterpublics*, has written of the kind of public "that comes into being only in relation to texts and their circulation" [Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002), 66]. In Chapter One, I built on Warner's insights, arguing that a "public" in anything like the modern Habermasian sense must be textually mediated and that such a public had its origins in England in the sixteenth century.

[5] Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, trans. Lydia Cochrane (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), *ix*.

of the material form of the printed book and of the market in which it circulated worked to Tyndale's advantage to a degree that neither Tyndale nor More could have fully realized.[6]

The initial inclination of both religious and secular authorities in England when faced with the threat of heretical literature from abroad was simply to condemn such materials, to outlaw their circulation, and to burn those copies that could be seized.[7] In the early years of the Reformation, Henry VIII and his government distinguished themselves in their efforts to counteract Luther's influence. Henry's own literary contribution, the *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum* of 1521, won him the coveted title "defender of the faith" from the pope. Royal and ecclesiastical pronouncements regarding the penalties for possessing heretical books were also effective. Andrew Pettegree has observed:

> Within the German Empire, possession of pamphlets might carry a sense of danger, but it was essentially safe. The situation was very different in those parts of Europe where the secular authorities had moved to inhibit the trade in Lutheran books before the evangelical movement had achieved a critical mass of public support.[8]

Such was the case in England. However, this danger was mitigated somewhat by the fact that while Thomas Wolsey and Cuthbert Tunstal were leading the church's fight against heresy, the authorities were often quite lenient when the accused demonstrated a willingness to recant their errors.

In the early 1520s, heresy was primarily perceived as a foreign contamination that had to be prevented from spreading across the English Channel. Using another analogy, Bishop Fisher of Rochester described Luther's teachings as a "blak clowde" looming on the

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[6] Mark Edwards has examined the same dynamics at work in Germany during the first few decades of Martin Luther's career as a reformer [Mark Edwards, *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994)].

[7] It is worth noting that even the effort to acquire and burn heretical works could be counterproductive. Edward Hall's *Chronicle* preserves the story of Augustine Packington, a merchant sympathetic to the reformers who sold copies of Tyndale's New Testament to Bishop Tunstal. Although the tale is clearly garbled, the statement attributed to Tyndale on hearing of this transaction is suggestive, "the whole world shall cry out upon the burning of God's word… [and] the overplus of the money, that shall remain to me, shall make me more studious, to correct the said New Testament, and so newly to imprint the same once again" [Quoted in David Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 197].

[8] Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion*, 170.

horizon.[9] This explains the fact that all of the early printed responses to Luther produced in England were written in Latin with the exception of the sermon Fisher preached at Paul's Cross on May 12, 1521, which was subsequently published. However, the situation changed rapidly in 1525 when reports from the Continent began to filter back to London that an Englishman living abroad in exile had produced and printed a new English Bible.[10] It was the growing belief that continental heresy was sinking roots in England, coupled with a fear of a reinvigoration of indigenous Lollardy, which led Cuthbert Tunstal, Bishop of London, to look for a reliable figure to answer the English heretics in the vernacular. In this hour of need he turned to Thomas More, to whom he wrote on March 7, 1528:

> [Y]ou, dearest brother, can play the Demosthenes in our native tongue just as well as in Latin, and are wont in every fight to be a most keen champion of catholic truth, you could in no wise better occupy your leisure hours—if you can steal any from your duties—than in putting forth some writings in English which will reveal to the simple and uneducated the crafty malice of the heretics, and render such folk better equipped against such impious supplanters of the church.[11]

More accepted this task willingly and over the next five years he would devote a great deal of his considerable energy and talent to the effort, producing nine English polemical works before his arrest and execution.

In the previous chapter, we examined several of the central themes of More's polemical works as well as his often damning criticisms of the reformers' teachings. However, despite its declared intentions, More's Catholic rebuttal actually helped to spread awareness of heretical ideas in at least three ways. First, lists of prohibited books disseminated by the authorities could actually serve to advertise titles that otherwise would have had a more limited circulation. Writing

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[9] John Fisher, *The sermon of John the bysshop of Rochester made agayn* y^e^ *pnicious doctryn of Martin luther* (London, Wynkyn de Worde, 1521), sig. A2r.

[10] On December 2, 1525, Edward Lee, who was at the time Henry VIII's almoner and who would become Archbishop of York after Wolsey's fall, wrote to the king from Bordeaux, "I ame certainlie enformed as I passed in this contree, that an englishman, your subiect at the sollicitation and instaunce of Luther…hathe translated the newe testament in to English" [Alfred Pollard, ed., *Records of the English Bible* (London: Oxford University Press, 1911), 108].

[11] Charles Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstal: Churchman, Scholar, Statesman, Administrator* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1938), 363.

about a slightly later period, Elizabeth Eisenstein has demonstrated that being included in the *Index of Forbidden Books* frequently raised a book's profile and in a competitive market any publicity could be good publicity.[12] Throughout the 1520s and 1530s, both secular and ecclesiastical leaders in England would also issue lists of proscribed books. As one prominent example, in the opening pages of his *Confutation* of 1532, More discussed more than twenty heretical books already in circulation.[13] His survey of heretical literature included ten translations or original compositions by Tyndale, as well as works by Simon Fish, George Joye, William Roye, George Constantine, John Frith, and Robert Barnes. More was also able to determine in most cases the author or translator of works published anonymously. True, dedicated Brethren would have been familiar with most of these writings through their own networks, but it seems inevitable that many of More's orthodox readers encountered these titles first in his polemical works.

At a second level, in order to refute heretical ideas it was necessary for Catholic apologists such as More to present the arguments of their opponents. At times, this fact troubled More and he declared quite frankly, "surely the very best waye were neyther to rede thys [book] nor theirs."[14] To be sure, the ideas of the reformers, when filtered through the minds of their Catholic adversaries, often appeared quite different than they had originally. Indeed, Mark Edwards has demonstrated persuasively that even sympathetic writers often distorted and subtly (or not so subtly) changed the message of the most influential reformers in their efforts to transmit those ideas.[15] In More's first English polemical work, his *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* published in June 1529, his central character, a literary version of himself,

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[12] Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 197.

[13] Thomas More, *The cōfutacyon of Tyndales answere made by Thomas More knght lorde chaūcellor of Englonde* (London, William Rastell, 1532), sig. Aa3r–Bb2r. Louis Schuster has correctly observed that in the preface to the *Confutation*, More provides "thirty-seven precious pages of documentary information and interpretation of the contemporary religious situation in England…in the early months of 1532" [Louis Schuster, "Thomas More's Polemical Career, 1523–1533," in Louis Schuster, Richard Marius, James Lusardi, and Richard Schoeck, eds., *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More, Vol. 8, Pt. III* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 1256]. Even for the modern historian, More remains an invaluable source for the early English Reformation.

[14] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. Ee3r.

[15] Edwards, *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther*, 98.

frequently sets up straw-man versions or even misrepresentations of Tyndale's positions and then destroys them. However, More's other character, the messenger, a young man flirting with the ideas of the reformers, often makes quite persuasive arguments as well and offers nuanced interpretations of scripture or criticisms of traditional Catholic teachings and practices. There was always the danger that the readers of More's *Dialogue* might find the messenger's initial position more compelling than More's response.

Finally, More and other Catholic apologists often helped to spread the ideas of the reformers in an even more direct way, by reproducing their opponents' statements verbatim and at length. In his *Responsio ad Lutherum* (1523), More made the interesting comment that Luther's *Babylonian Captivity* was so obviously flawed that simply allowing people to read it might actually help in its refutation.[16] Luther's continental opponent Thomas Murner had already gone even further, producing a German translation of *De Captivitate Babylonica* "according to the rather obscure wisdom that he should warn his fellow-Germans about Luther's reform and the danger of his ideas."[17] Despite More's evident fear that even refutations of heresy might pose a danger to the laity, he seems frequently to have shared with Murner the belief that truth and error would be self-evidently apparent to the objective observer.

Nevertheless, the modern reader may wonder at More's decision in many of his polemical writings to essentially reprint the works he sought to refute. Again, this tendency is evident already in the *Responsio* of 1523. Richard Marius points out:

> We may surmise that people who wanted to know what Luther was saying now had a text that would not endanger them if the authorities found it in their possession; they could read Luther without having to

[16] Schuster, "Thomas More's Polemical Career," 1148.

[17] John Headley, "Thomas Murner, Thomas More, and the First Expression of More's Ecclesiology," *Studies in the Renaissance*, Vol. 14 (1967): 75. Headley discusses the interaction between Murner and More at a pivotal moment in More's early polemical career. Murner was one of the few Catholic opponents of Luther to recognize immediately the full significance of the printing revolution, although his enthusiasm to answer his opponent actually ran into resistance from Catholic authorities [Robert Scribner, *For the Sake of the Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 235–239].

> pay attention to More's comments at all, since Luther's words were set off from More's in black type.[18]

Granted, the danger in the case of the *Responsio* was limited by the fact that it was written in Latin. However, More's use of the same approach in his *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer* potentially allowed readers to reconstruct Tyndale's writings by means of a text whose expressed intent was to refute their message.[19] Although it will be observed in a moment that it is difficult to demonstrate that even orthodox and sympathetic readers read More's *Confutation*, it nevertheless seems legitimate to some extent to count the *Confutation* among the available editions of Tyndale's *Answer*.

II. *Readers of Reformist Literature*

The preceding observations are suggestive but still largely speculative. Were the books of Tyndale and More actually being read and if so, by whom? These questions are hard to answer and have not been dealt with sufficiently by intellectual historians in their discussions of the period. In the case of works by the early English reformers, one must rely primarily on the records of the bishops whose job it was to track down and punish those bold enough to purchase and read such texts and also on the documents and accounts of the period preserved in the various editions of the Elizabethan martyrologist John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*.[20] For example, in February of 1528 Bishop Tunstal launched a concerted campaign against just such suspected individuals. David Daniell noted, "The depositions of the prisoners taken in this campaign provide the first profile of the likely readership of that first

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[18] Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 280–281.

[19] In answer to the charge that he had misrepresented Tyndale's position, More would declare in his *Apology*, "that his chapyters be whole rehersed in my boke, I suppose yt maye metely well appere…if the reader leue my wordes out bytwene, and rede but Tyndales alone" [Thomas More, *The apologye of syr Thomas More knight* (London, William Rastell, 1533), sig. C1v].

[20] See Cynthia Zollinger's essay "Sixteenth Century Literacy in Text and Context." Zollinger uses Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* to construct "an extensive ethnography of Protestant reading and writing practices…which maps the cultural role of literacy and its iconic identification with the Protestant faith" [Cynthia Zollinger, "Sixteenth Century Literacy in Text and Context," in Christopher Highley and John King, ed., *John Foxe and his World* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002), 103].

New Testament."[21] Examining such sources, one finds a wide range of individuals who purchased vernacular Bibles and other heretical works. In Robert Necton's confession of May 1528, for example, we hear of "William Furboshore synging man," "William Gibson merchaunt man," "a Priste…in Northfolke," and other "diverse persons of the cite of London."[22]

Foxe provides by far the most extensive catalogue of Tyndale's readers.[23] James Bainham, with whose case Stephen Greenblatt began his chapter on Tyndale in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, was a lawyer and the son of a knight from Gloucestershire.[24] Foxe describes Lawrence Staple as a "serving man."[25] John Tewkesbury was a leather seller of London.[26] John Maundrell of Wiltshire was "from his childhode brought vp in husbādry."[27] Readers included priests and monks, such as Richard Bayfield, as well as laypeople.[28] There was also a wide range of educational backgrounds represented. John Lambert had learned Latin and Greek at Cambridge while John Maundrell was never "without the new Testament about him, although he could not read him self."[29] Greenblatt has observed that even for those individuals capable of reading an older Latin version, "the English Scriptures spoke to the heart in a way the Latin Vulgate never could; the vernacular was the unself-conscious language of the inner man."[30] This was an experience that these diverse readers all shared.

Tyndale's works also reached the hands of the most privileged in society. B.F. Westcott notes, for example, that one of the surviving copies of Tyndale's 1534 New Testament seems to have belonged to Henry VIII's second wife, Anne Boleyn. As is well known, Anne and

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[21] Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography*, 178.

[22] Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, Vol. I, Pt. II, 63–64.

[23] For a discussion of Foxe's reliability as a source, see Brad Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 16–26.

[24] Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 74; John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments of these latter and perilous dayes* (London, John Day, 1563), 494.

[25] John Foxe, *The first volume of the ecclesiasticall history contayynge the actes and monuments* (London, John Day, 1570), 1187.

[26] Ibid., 1165–1167.

[27] Ibid., 2073.

[28] Ibid., 1161–1165.

[29] John Foxe, *Acts and monuments of matters most speciall and memorable* (London, John Day, 1583), 1101; Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1570), 2073.

[30] Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 96.

her circle at court were sympathetic to the cause of reform. In 1534, she intervened in the case of the Antwerp merchant Richard Herman, who had been involved in the production of English Bibles, and the Bible in question, the gilded edges of which bear the words *Anna Regina Angliae*, may have been a gift of thanks.[31] Westcott goes on to observe that a printer in England patronized by Anne's faction would issue an edition of Tyndale's revised New Testament in 1536, the first to be printed in his homeland.[32] Anne is also said to have played a role in bringing Tyndale's *Obedience of a Christian Man* to Henry VIII's attention.

That members of a wider spectrum of English society now had access to a Bible of their own was a result of the profound changes in quantity and thus price made possible by the new medium of print. The exact number of vernacular Bibles produced during Tyndale's lifetime and in the years immediately following is unclear. Greenblatt suggests that there may have been 50,000 by 1536.[33] Tyndale's biographer David Daniell arrived at a similar number. First, there were the print runs from Cologne and Worms, totaling between nine and twelve thousand copies.[34] Daniell also points to Tyndale's 1534 and 1535 New Testaments. His research, updating that of earlier bibliographers such as Anderson, Fry, and Pollard, found twelve pirated editions by late 1536, with average print runs estimated at 2,000 copies

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[31] B.F. Westcott and W.A. Wright, *A General View of the History of the English Bible* [1868] (London: Macmillan and Co., 1905), 48. For further discussion of Anne and her use of both English and French vernacular Bibles, see E.W. Ives, *Anne Boleyn* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 314–318.

[32] Westcott, *History of the English Bibles*, 48–49. Maria Dowling has also noted that Anne was interested in reading scripture and that because her Latin was not very strong she would read translations in French, more readily available to elite readers than English Bibles [Maria Dowling, *Humanism in the Age of Henry VIII* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 232]. There is also evidence that Anne's daughter, the future Queen Elizabeth, had a personal copy of Tyndale's *Obedience*. The nineteenth-century antiquarian George Offor possessed a copy of the work in the 1830s with an inscription reading "Elizabeth, doughter of England and France" [George Offer, *Memoir of William Tyndale, Who First Printed the New Testament in English, 1525; and Was Martyred at Vilvoord, Near Brussels, September, 1536* (London: S. Bagster, 1836), 47].

[33] Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 96. Far more copies of Luther's vernacular Bibles were produced on the Continent during this period, but the situation of the reformers in England was more precarious and 50,000 copies is certainly not negligible.

[34] The Cologne numbers come from Cochlaeus (Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, 104), the Worms numbers from Hermann von dem Busche via George Spalatin [Edward Arber, ed., *The First Printed English New Testament, Translated by William Tyndale* (London, UK: s.n., 1871), 25–26].

each.[35] Finally, there were the editions of Coverdale's Bible after 1535. Daniell estimates that by 1640 there may have been as many as two million English Bibles or portions of scripture that had been printed, all within roughly a century of Tyndale's death.[36]

Although the price of these individual copies certainly fluctuated due to the introduction of new editions, the uncertainties of transportation across the Channel, and the level of vigilance on the part of English authorities, it is possible to speak generally about what a Tyndale New Testament may have cost in the decade after its introduction. A statement by John Foxe in the 1570 edition of his *Acts and Monuments* provides some initial data for this discussion. Speaking of the impact of printing, Foxe complained that "for as much as in those former daies, bokes thē were scarse, and also of such excessiue price…fewe could atteyne to the byeng, fewer to the readyng and studying therof."[37] He then went on to note that whereas a New Testament cost the Lollard Nicholas Belward four marks and forty pence in the 1420s, "now the same price will serue well .xl. persons with so many bookes."[38] If taken literally, this suggests a unit price of 1s 5d for a New Testament in Foxe's day, thirty years after Tyndale's death.[39] While Foxe's remark is probably only rhetorical, it nevertheless provides a starting point for discussion.

Invaluable evidence concerning the price of the New Testament in the 1520s can be found in the confession of Robert Necton, who appeared before Wolsey in May 1528. Necton admitted to the Cardinal that he sold "fyve of the said New Testaments…in Suffolk for VII. or VIII. grotes a pece. Also, two of the same New Testaments in Bury St. Edmonds…for the same price."[40] A groat was a silver coin worth 4d, meaning that the Bibles just described were purchased for between 2s 4d and 2s 8d apiece. Around Christmas 1527, Necton sold Richard Bayfield two unbound New Testaments for 3s 4d.[41] If this was the

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[35] David Daniell, *The Bible in English* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 804–805.

[36] Ibid., 121.

[37] John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1570), 838.

[38] Ibid., 838.

[39] £1 = 20s (shillings), 1s = 12d (pence), £1 = 240d. For further discussion of the history and development of English currency, see Albert Feavearyear, *The Pound Sterling: A History of English Money* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963). Average wages and the potential buying power of early sixteenth-century money will be discussed below.

[40] Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, Vol. I, Pt. II, 63.

[41] Ibid., 64.

combined price for the two books, Bayfield paid 1s 8d for each of them. Around this same period, as we have already seen, John Tyball purchased a New Testament from Robert Barnes for 3s 2d.[42] Wholesale, Bibles could be acquired for even less. Necton told Wolsey that he had recently been offered two or three hundred New Testaments by a certain "Duche man, beyng now in the Flete" for £15 5s, around 9d each.[43] Even if this wholesale price was subsequently marked up one hundred percent, the average of the prices above is still only 2s 2d.[44]

For these calculations to be meaningful, however, it is necessary to determine what the average income of sixteenth-century Englishmen would have been. Anecdotal evidence can provide an approximate estimate. In August 1535, Sir William Fitzwilliam wrote to Cromwell from Dover to report that workers there were demanding 6d a day. The government's initial response was to jail the workers' leaders, but by January 1537 it seems that laborers on the king's bulwarks were receiving the 6d they had requested.[45] Less reliably, but perhaps still indicative, is the complaint by Simon Fish in his *Supplication of Beggars*, "what is he that wolde laboure for a grote [4d] a day and may haue at lest .xij.d. to be baude to a prest, a monke, or a frere?"[46] The polemical nature of Fish's remark requires that the second half of this statement be taken with a grain of salt. However, he had little reason to distort his estimate of a typical worker's daily income.

Fortunately, recent scholarship has provided far more scientific estimates of average wages based on statistical analysis of much larger samples of primary source material. For example, Jan Luiten van Zanden has examined evidence for the daily incomes of laborers in Oxford, Cambridge, Dover, Canterbury, and London. He determined that in the 1520s an Oxford laborer could expect to make 4d per day while a laborer in London might make 5d. The average for laborers in all the locations van Zanden examined during this period was 4.3d, confirming the general accuracy of Fish's remark.[47] As one might expect,

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[42] Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, Vol. I, Pt. II, 55.

[43] Ibid., 65.

[44] This estimated cost is close to that calculated by the nineteenth-century scholar Edward Arber, 2s 6d (Arber, *The First Printed English New Testament*, 45).

[45] Lord Beveridge, "Wages and Inflation in the Past," *The Incorporated Statistician*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1957): 5–6.

[46] Simon Fish, *Supplication for the Beggars* (Antwerp, Grapheus, 1529), fol. 4v.

[47] Jan Luiten van Zandern, "Wages and the cost of living in Southern England (London) 1450–1700," http://www.iisg.nl/hp/dover.php (February 7, 2008).

more skilled laborers would usually earn more than their less skilled associates. Indeed, John Munro has shown that a skilled worker, such as a carpenter or mason, could earn 6d per day in the 1520s and 6.5d by 1535.[48] This means that at an average price of 2s 2d, a Tyndale New Testament would cost approximately four and a half days' wages for a skilled laborer and six days' wages for an unskilled laborer. However, as the stories preserved by Foxe demonstrate, the New Testament was a book for which people were willing to save and sacrifice. For those with the desire to acquire an English Bible, and presumably other reformist literature as well, print made such acquisition possible even if it remained difficult.

Foxe's accounts of the trials and tribulations of individual readers of the works of Tyndale and other reformers are often informative, providing vivid snapshots of those who took risks to acquire heretical literature. James Bainham, originally from Tyndale's own home region of Gloucestershire and later a parishioner of St. Dunstan's in London where the translator had briefly preached in the early 1520s, had his own small heretical library. His confession to the Bishop of London in December 1531 reveals that among other works he owned Tyndale's *New Testament*, as well as *Wicked Mammon, Obedience of a Christian Man, Practice of Prelates*, and *An Answer unto More's Dialogue*.[49] Richard Bayfield, a monk from Norwich converted by Barnes, had an even more extensive collection of books by both Continental and English authors.[50] Both men would ultimately suffer martyrdom for their participation in and adherence to the evangelical reform movement. There were hundreds, perhaps thousands of other readers, however, whose names and stories we will probably never know.

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[48] John Munro, "Money, Wages, and Real Incomes in the Age of Erasmus: The Purchasing Power of Coins and of Building Craftsmen's Wages in England and the Low Countries, 1500–1540," Working Paper No. 1 (May 24, 2001), Department of Economics, University of Toronto, http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/ecipa/archive/UT-ECIPA-MUNRO-01-01.pdf (February 7, 2008), 176.

[49] During his interrogation, Bainham declared that he read the English Bible "notwithstanding the kynges proclamation to the contrary, for that the churche of Christe had not forbydden it." Concerning the other books, "he affirmed [them] to be good for ought that he euer read in them" [Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1563), 494].

[50] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1570), 1163.

III. *Printing and Circulation*

Such examples, while fascinating, remain anecdotal. In his work on the role of print in the German Reformation, Mark Edwards provides a more objective set of criteria for determining demand for and circulation of specific texts. He suggests that by examining the printing history of a text, and particularly the contexts in which it was reprinted, it is possible to tease out the level and nature of demand.[51] In the absence of other sources of information, such data is essential. The print history of Luther's biblical translations and his other works has been the subject of extensive analysis. Unfortunately, this is not the case in England and this has typically meant that historians have merely juxtaposed the arguments put forward by Tyndale and More and then determined which they found most persuasive without reference to how widely those arguments and the books in which they were contained were circulated at the time.

When one approaches the subject along the lines suggested by Edwards, a striking imbalance is revealed. In an essay appended to the Yale edition of Thomas More's *Complete Works* (1973), James Lusardi notes that neither section of More's *Confutation* was reprinted during his lifetime or before they were included in William Rastell's collection during the reign of Mary (r. 1553–1558). Further, "since the publication of his [Rastell's] 'commodius and profytable boke,' over half of More's writings in English have remained unprinted and unedited, the *Confutation* among them."[52] It should be noted that Rastell was More's relative and that his polemical works were only reproduced in the context of an effort to reprint all of More's writings in the brief period in which Catholicism was reintroduced in England in the 1550s.[53] Even More's strongest defenders, both in the century after his

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[51] Edwards, *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther*, 8–10.

[52] James Lusardi, "The Texts," in Louis Schuster, Richard Marius, James Lusardi, and Richard Schoeck, eds., *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More, Vol. 8, Pt. III* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 1426. Richard Marius, in his biography of More, has likewise observed, "we look in vain for substantial literary proof that people read More's polemics for long…the polemical works fell into almost total oblivion" (Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography, xv*).

[53] Eamon Duffy has recently demonstrated that Cardinal Reginald Pole, papal legate and Archbishop of Canterbury during Mary's reign, encouraged the production of this edition of More's works in an effort "to refashion More's image as a paradigm of lay orthodoxy and true martyrdom, and to make available his anti-heretical and martyrological writings in English" [Eamon Duffy, *Fires of Faith: Catholic England under*

death and in our own time, have often shied away from his polemical works.[54] While More chose on his tombstone to characterize himself as a "hammer of heretics," the perpetuators of his memory have preferred to recall him as the humanist author of *Utopia*, a "man for all seasons," or as a martyr who died for the sake of conscience.[55]

The print history of Tyndale's writings provides a stark contrast to the legacy of More's works, with numerous new editions issued at key moments throughout the sixteenth century. For example, consider the 1526 Worms New Testament. Tyndale himself produced revised editions in 1534 and 1535. In 1536, the year of his death, the New Testament was reprinted in London by Thomas Godfray.[56] His various translations were also extensively incorporated into the complete Bibles of Miles Coverdale (1535) and John Rogers (1537) and thus became the greatest single influence on all future English versions.[57] Equally important at the time were the many pirated editions of Tyndale's translation. Guido Latré has demonstrated that already by late in 1526 a pirated edition of the Worms New Testament was being distributed by the Antwerp printer Christoffel van Ruremund.[58] While

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Mary Tudor (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 179–180]. It is worth noting that More's works were not reprinted by Catholic religious exiles in the final years of Henry VIII's reign, or under Edward VI or Elizabeth, in contrast to many of Tyndale's writings, which were printed and distributed despite state opposition under Henry.

[54] Marius' characterization of the *Confutation*, which runs to well over a thousand pages in the modern Yale edition, as "bitter, ugly, [and] almost unreadable" has already been noted (Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography*, 424). More himself reported in a later work that the Brethren complained that "my wrytyng is so long and so tedyouse, that they wil not ones vouchsaufe to loke theron" (More, *Apology of Sir Thomas More*, sig. C2r). That a line-by-line—sometimes word-by-word—refutation of Tyndale would be long is not surprising, for "it is a shorter thyng and soner done to wryte heresyes than to answere them" (Ibid., sig. C3r). However, the suspicions of the modern reader are confirmed when More explains that he eventually resolved to say everything he wanted to say in each chapter lest the reader decide not to read the book in its entirety (Ibid., sig. C4r). Despite his evident passion, More does not seem to have produced works appropriate for his target audience, "the simple and uneducated" of whom Tunstal spoke in his letter of March 1528 (Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstal*, 363). One finds it hard to imagine the "ryght meane learned man, or almost…vnlerned woman" More mentions in the *Confutation* reading his polemical works and there is no clear evidence to suggest that they did (More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. Dd1v).

[55] "A Man for all Seasons" was the title of Robert Bolt's 1960 play about More.

[56] See *Short Title Catalogue* entry 2831.

[57] Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 155. Eighty-three percent of the KJV New Testament is actually Tyndale's work (Daniell, *Bible in English*, 136).

[58] Paul Arblaster, Gergely Juhász, and Guido Latré, *Tyndale's Testament* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 5. A similar phenomenon can be observed in Germany,

the printers who issued such editions may have been motivated by a reforming religious agenda, the desire for profit also played an important role. Even religiously motivated printers had no desire to bankrupt themselves and many of the printers who printed Tyndale's works demonstrated their business acumen through their long careers.

These pirated versions were frequently of varying quality. Consider the Antwerp printer Christopher Endhoven's pirated editions of Tyndale's New Testament. John Hackett, the English Ambassador to the Low Countries, reported in a letter to Wolsey from Antwerp on November 24, 1526, "Aftyr my comyng here to thys towne, I haue send privily to all places here to know surly, wher that thys nywe translatyed volumes be pryntyd In Inglishe, or to be solde."[59] Hackett's investigation would have led him to Endhoven, since Tyndale was probably still in Worms at this time seeing his *Introduction to Romans* through the press. George Joye also provides an account of these early pirated editions in his *Apology*, published in 1535.[60] He discusses four editions produced by "the Dwche men" (Endhoven and later his widow) between 1526 and 1534, numbering in his estimation at least nine thousand copies.[61] Joye justified his decision to edit the last of these editions, observing that "they had no englisshe man to correcke the setting… [and] were compelled to make many mo fautes then were in the copye & so corrupted the boke."[62] He also noted that the printer had no fear of finding a ready market, particularly since, as the owner of the print shop explained, "we wil sel ours beter cheape."[63]

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where eighty-seven pirated editions of Luther's German translation of the Bible were produced between 1522 and 1546 [Jane Newman, "The Word Made Print: Luther's 1522 New Testament in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Representations*, No. 11 (1985): 106].

[59] Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, 135.

[60] Joye's *Apology* was part of an ongoing exchange between Tyndale and Joye regarding alterations that the latter had made to the text of Tyndale's original English translation. For more on this often bitter dispute, refer to the detailed discussion of the issue in Charles Butterworth & Allan Chester, *George Joye, 1495?–1553: A Chapter in the History of the English Bible and the English Reformation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962), 147–181, and to the preface of Arber's edition of the *Apology* [Edward Arber, ed., *George Joy: An Apology made by George Joy to satisfy, if it may be, W. Tindale 1535* (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Co., 1895)].

[61] George Joye, *An apolgye made by George Ioye to satisfye (if it maye be) w. Tindale* (London, John Byddell, 1535), sig. C3r–C4r.

[62] Joye, *An Apology made by George Joye*, sig. C3r.

[63] Ibid., sig. C3r.

Tyndale's polemical works were also often reprinted. Take for example his *Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, loosely based on a work by Luther and one of the earliest printed expressions in English of a reformed theology of justification. First printed in Antwerp by Merten de Keyser in 1528, it was later reissued by James Nicolson in Southwark in 1536 and then by various London printers in 1537, 1547, 1548, 1549, and 1561 before being included in John Foxe's *Whole Works of Tyndale, Frith, and Barnes* published by John Day in 1573.[64] These dates are themselves significant, for they demonstrate that Tyndale's works were reissued at pivotal moments in the history of the English Reformation—after Henry's legislative reforms in the mid 1530s and again early in the reigns of Edward and Elizabeth, when they could provide potential direction for the future of the English church.

The Obedience of a Christian Man, Tyndale's most important contribution to the debates regarding the nature of the secular and religious regiments and the proper relationship between them, reveals a similar pattern of printings. First issued by Tyndale from the press of de Keyser in Antwerp in October 1528, it was reprinted two more times in the Low Countries in 1535 and 1537 and again in London in 1536/7, three times in London in 1548, and finally in 1561.[65] The presence of extensive marginalia in some of these subsequent editions demonstrates that they were in fact being read, as well as suggesting which elements of Tyndale's thought resonated with readers in a slightly later period. In the British Library's copy of William Coplande's 1548 edition of *Obedience*, a reader has drawn pointing fingers (a device often used by printers as well) at what must have seemed key points in the text. These fingers mark passages that deal with unjust judges and unlawful witnesses, the dangers women and pride pose to kings, and the admonition that kings should not provoke wars with neighboring nations.[66] The statement that men "may breake their othes lawfull w^{t} out grudge of cōsciēce by the auctorite of gods worde" is also flagged by a pointing finger.[67] In the British Library's copy of Coplande's later 1561 edition, someone has drawn little symbols that look like small

[64] See *Short Title Catalogue* entries 24454 through 24461; John Foxe, *The Whole Workes of W. Tyndall, Iohn Frith, and Doct. Barnes* (London, John Day, 1573).

[65] *Short Title Catalogue* entries 24446 through 24453.

[66] William Tyndale, *The Obediēce of a Christen man, and how christen rulers ought to gouerne* (London, William Coplande, 1548{?}), fol. 57v–58r [BL shelf number G.11684].

[67] Tyndale, *Obedience* (1548), fol. 59v–60r.

three-leaf clovers, for example, next to Tyndale's statement "thys thretening and forbiddynge the laye people to reade the scriptur is not for loue of your soules."[68] These annotations demonstrate that readers in the decades after Tyndale's death continued to be concerned with issues over which he and More had argued and that Tyndale's books were read with interest.[69]

The subsequent editions that have just been considered are fairly straightforward reprintings of Tyndale's works. In almost every case Tyndale's original text is reproduced with almost no substantive changes and without new or additional prefaces, although running headers are occasionally added to aid the reader in navigating the book.[70] In several instances, multiple works by Tyndale have been bound together even when produced by different printers, although when this occurred is unclear. For example, in the British Library's copy, Richard Hill's 1548 edition of *Obedience* has been bound up with John Day's 1547 edition of *Mammon*. It is only with John Foxe's reprinting of Tyndale's writings in his *The Whole Workes* of 1573 that the strong presence of an editor with his own agenda begins to be felt.[71] Some of Foxe's changes are immediately evident, as in his decision to alter the title of *The Practice of Prelates* to *The Practice of Papisticall Prelates*.[72] In other cases, Foxe shapes the reader's interpretations by adding his own printed notes in the margins.[73]

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[68] William Tyndale, *The Obedyence of a Chrysten man, and howe christen rulers ought to gouerne* (London, William Coplande, 1561), fol. 21r [BL shelf number C.21.a.15].

[69] Unfortunately, it is impossible to say whether these passages have been singled out by readers interested in supporting or in refuting the positions Tyndale had advocated.

[70] William Tyndale, *The Obedience of a Christen man, and how Christen rulers ought to gouerne* (Antwerp, Peetersen van Middelburch{?}, 1535) [BL shelf number C.25.a.35].

[71] For an introduction to Foxe's life, see J.F. Mozley, *John Foxe and his Book* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940). For further discussion of Foxe's influence on the creation of Tyndale's subsequent reputation and on the transmission of his writings, see John King, "The Light of Printing: William Tyndale, John Foxe, John Day, and Early Modern Print Culture," *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (Spring 2001): 52–8 and David Daniell's essay in David Loades, ed., *John Foxe: An Historical Perspective* (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1999).

[72] Patrick Collinson has suggested that Foxe was reacting to the official condemnation of Queen Elizabeth by the pope several years earlier [Collinson, "William Tyndale and the Course of the English Reformation," *Reformation*, Vol. 1 (1996): 72–97].

[73] King argues that in several cases the "[m]arginal glosses added by Foxe direct the reader to accept unambiguously tendentious interpretations" (King, "The Light of Printing," 61). In one particularly egregious case, Foxe changes the paragraph breaks

In other cases, Tyndale's works were transmitted in an altered, even disguised form. In 1547, Tyndale's assistant and friend Miles Coverdale published a book entitled *The Christen rule or state of all the worlde from the highest to the lowest: and how euery man shulde lyue to please God in his callynge*. The *Short Title Catalogue* entry for the work suggests that it is not an original composition on the part of Coverdale but does not speculate as to its actual authorship.[74] In his brief prefatory remarks, Coverdale suggests that since people are often too busy to read the best books he has decided to distill from all of them (he mentions no particular works by name) the fundamental duties and responsibilities for men and women in all stations of life.[75] However, on a closer reading one finds that almost all of the material is repeated word-for-word from Tyndale's *Obedience of a Christian Man*, a fact that has not previously been recognized by modern scholars.

That Coverdale believed it would be prudent to leave his primary source undisclosed while disseminating his mentor's work is not surprising. Although according to tradition Henry VIII is said to have been initially impressed by a superficial reading of *Obedience*—"this book is for me and all kings to read"—it was subsequently condemned

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so as to alter Tyndale's obvious intended meaning. This occurs in Tyndale's *A briefe declaration of the sacraments*, probably first printed around 1533 but surviving in its earliest form in an edition printed by Stoughton in 1548 (STC 24445). In this work, Tyndale distinguishes between three different interpretations of the Eucharist: transubstantiation, consubstantiation, and remembrance/memorial. Tyndale writes, "ye ought of no right to be angry with them of the third opinion" [Henry Walter, ed., *Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions to Different Portions of the Holy Scriptures by William Tyndale, Martyr, 1536* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2005), 370—here I am quoting Henry Walter's Parker Society edition of 1848, which follows Foxe's 1573 rendering]. Tyndale is actually seeking to differentiate himself from the Lutheran position but Foxe, who wanted to downplay the divisions between Protestants, alters the paragraph breaks to make it appear that this statement is directed at Catholics and then adds a marginal note declaring "Papists be aggrieved with such as consent not to their gross opinion." This is just one example of why scholars must be careful when relying exclusively on the nineteenth-century Parker Society edition of Tyndale, the only modern edition of several of his works.

[74] See *Short Title Catalogue* entry 5887.

[75] Coverdale writes, "I haue here gathered together out of y^{e} most famous authors of our Englishe tōge, the whole office and dewtye of euery Christē man. And specially & aboue all things…the dutye of suiectes towarde theyr princes…For neuer had any prince so much nede of harty obediēt suiectes…thā haue our mooste dreade souereyne lord kyng Henry the eyght" [Coverdale, *The Christen rule or state of all the worlde* (1547{?}), sig. A2r]. The *STC* suggests a date of 1548 but the preceding passage points to a date of composition before Henry's death.

and included on lists of prohibited works.[76] In 1529, Thomas More called it (not all that cleverly) Tyndale's "boke of obedyēce or rather dysobedyence."[77] Those places where Coverdale does alter Tyndale's text are instructive because they suggest the forces at work in the years after Tyndale's death. For example, Coverdale emphasizes the material dealing with the Christian's duty to obey the king. Where Tyndale ends one introductory section with the words "This shall suffice at this tyme as concernynge obedience," Coverdale punctuates the sentence by adding the phrase "vnto prynces."[78]

The later work also clearly reflects an evolving official position on the nature of the papacy. For example, Coverdale removes one of Tyndale's section titles reading "Agenst the popis false power" and continues without a break in the text.[79] What is going on here is perhaps more evident later when Coverdale alters Tyndale's statement "Gods worde shulde rule only & not Bisshopes decrees or y^{e} Popes pleasure" to "Gods worde shulde rule onely & not Bishops decrees, or the Bishoppe of Romes pleasure."[80] Richard Rex has demonstrated that from early in 1533, Henry and his polemicists consciously shifted from speaking of the pope and began to talk only about the bishop of Rome.[81] Coverdale's editing of Tyndale reflects a willingness to fall into line with these new conventions.[82] Nevertheless, the radical nature and implications of Tyndale's position are preserved and passed on to a new generation of readers.

Tyndale's writings also lived on in more unusual ways. The British Library holds a copy of a work published in 1674 with a long but interesting title: *A LOOKING-GLASS For all those called PROTESTANTS IN THESE Three Nations. Wherein they may see, who are True Protestants,*

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[76] Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, Vol. I, Pt. I, 171–172.

[77] More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. R6v. Roland Worth has discussed several other instances late in Henry VIII's reign where those sympathetic to reform drew on Tyndale while obscuring the fact from more conservative members of the regime [Roland Worth, *Monarch and Bible in Sixteenth Century England: The Political Context of Biblical Translation* (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2000), 67, 74].

[78] Coverdale, *Christian Rule or State*, sig. C7v.

[79] Ibid., sig. B6r.

[80] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man* (1528), sig. G8r; Coverdale, *Christian Rule or State*, sig. D4v.

[81] Richard Rex, "The Crisis of Obedience: God's Word and Henry's Reformation," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (1996): 879.

[82] Interestingly, the edition of *Obedience* printed by William Hill in London in 1548 retains the use of "pope" [Tyndale, *The Obedyence of A Christian man* (London, William Hill, 1548), sig. G3r].

and who are degenerated and gone from the Testimony and Doctrine of the Antient Protestants. AND Hereby it is made to appear, that the People, called in derision Quakers, are true (yea the truest) Protestants, because their Testimony agreeth with the Testimony of the Antient Protestants… Particularly, with the Testimony and Doctrine of William Tindal, who is called a Worthy Martyr, and Principal Teacher of the Church of England; Faithfully Collected out of his Works. Produced by the Quaker George Keith, the book selectively quotes from a wide range of Tyndale's writings in an effort to demonstrate that the religious teachings of Keith's community were more in keeping with those of the earlier reformers than the teachings of any other denomination in the period after the Restoration.[83] Although Keith's work includes both factual errors about Tyndale's life and misrepresentations of his theology, it is nevertheless a fascinating example of Tyndale's legacy among many different Protestant groups.[84]

IV. *Additional Implications of the Medium of Print*

That the biblical translations and the other writings of sixteenth-century reformers were frequently in higher demand than the responses and rebuttals of their Catholic opponents was evident even to Tyndale's and More's contemporaries. In the spring of 1524, Leipzig printers complained bitterly because they were not allowed to publish the extremely popular Lutheran pamphlets that had swelled printing production of such works in the Empire forty-fold since 1517.[85] In England, More declared in his *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, "Of bokes of heresyes there be so many made with in these few yeres, what by Luther hym selfe and by hys felowes… that y^{e} bare names

[83] George Keith, *A LOOKING-GLASS For all those called PROTESTANTS IN THESE Three Nations* (London, 1674), sig. A4v.

[84] Keith mistakenly states that Tyndale died in Flanders during the reign of Queen Mary (Keith, *A Looking Glass*, sig. A3v). Keith's eighth chapter is entitled "Concerning the Inward Preaching, Teaching, and Speaking of the Spirit of God, unto the Soul, and inward reading and hearing, and that true Believers believe the Principles of their Faith, not because they are written in books, but because they are inwardly taught by the Spirit of God" (p. 12). Although there is nothing in this statement to which Tyndale would necessarily object, the later Quaker text suggests a subtle reemphasis upon the work of the Holy Spirit that devalued the written word of the Bible and with which Tyndale would have been profoundly uncomfortable.

[85] Edwards, *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther*, 14.

of those bokes were almoste inough to make a boke."[86] What were not apparent were the more subtle yet profound implications of the new medium of print, those aspects of the production and distribution of books that D.F. McKenzie has labeled the "sociology of texts."[87] Consideration of the "mechanisms that make [texts]…available to interpretation" provides fascinating new insights into the debate between More and Tyndale.[88]

For example, why is it that Tyndale and many of his contemporaries began to doubt the claim that the Catholic Church had preserved the unadulterated teachings of the early Christian community? The explosion of printed books and the transformed mentalities that this new technology began to produce certainly played a significant role. The social anthropologist Jack Goody has described what he calls the *homeostatic* nature of most pre-literate societies, in which "the individual has little perception of the past except in terms of the present."[89] However, humanism, spurred on and disseminated by the printing press, permitted the gradual development of a more critical view of the past.[90] As an illustration, consider how Lorenzo Valla's new appreciation for the historical development of Latin allowed him to demonstrate that the *Donation of Constantine* was a forgery.[91] Erasmus of Rotterdam would be the primary conduit for this new,

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[86] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. Aa3v. This is the same passage in which More goes on to list the English-language books of heresy already in circulation.

[87] D.F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 13.

[88] Chartier, *The Order of Books*, 3. Chartier also argues that the scholar's task is "to reconstruct the variations that differentiate…texts in their discursive and material forms—and those that govern the circumstances of their *effectuation*—that is, the readings, understood as concrete practices and as procedures of interpretation" (Ibid., 2).

[89] Jack Goody and Ian Watt, "The Consequences of Literacy," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (1963): 310.

[90] Elizabeth Eisenstein has suggested that it was the printing press that made the Renaissance of the fifteenth century more enduring and transformative than its ninth- and twelfth-century precursors (Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*, 130).

[91] We know that Tyndale was familiar with Valla's work (Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. D7r). Ten years earlier, in 1520, Luther had also been shocked when he read about Valla's discoveries [Heiko Oberman, *Luther: Man between God and the Devil* (London: Fontana Press, 1993) 42].

more critical approach to the past and to the Christian tradition in Northern Europe.[92]

Although Thomas More was himself a well-educated humanist, he chose in his polemical writings to articulate and defend what, to echo Goody's term, might be called a homeostatic view of church history. Recall a statement from More's *Confutation* discussed in the previous chapter, "These truthes had the apostles, the martyrs, the confessours, the holy doctours of Crytis chyrche, and the comen crysten people of euery age."[93] Ever greater availability of printed Bibles and critical editions of other early Christian writings, as well as an increasing awareness of historical development, made such claims more difficult to defend. Tyndale argued, contrary to More's claims, that medieval Catholic interpreters had not preserved pristine traditions from the early church. Instead, they had obscured the truth by synthesizing it with the teachings of Aristotle. Even then, there was no consensus. In his words, "[these] doctours are…dyvers, the one contrary vnto the other…none lyke a nother…Every religion [probably religious order], every vniversite & all most every man hath asondry dyvinite."[94] Reformers also appealed to precedents for their own positions in the past, which they argued had been forgotten or suppressed.[95]

The impact of such developments also helps to explain another aspect of Tyndale's attack on the established church which we have previously noted, his belief in a grand conspiracy perpetrated by the clergy against an unsuspecting laity. To quote Jack Goody again, "Writing…favors awareness of inconsistency. One aspect of this is a

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[92] For more on Erasmus see Cornelis Augustijn, *Erasmus: His Life, Works, and Influence* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991). Once the Reformation got underway, Erasmus' legacy was contested and reinterpreted by those on both sides of the new religious divide. Both More and Tyndale were influenced by his writings.

[93] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. a3r.

[94] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. C2v–C3r. More legitimately responded by pointing out that the reformers did not agree amongst themselves either. Referring to the failure of the reformers to reach a consensus on the nature of the Lord's Supper at the Marburg Colloquy in 1529, More mocked, "eche of them…agaynst other amonge them selfe saye and swere that the scrypture is playne for theyr parte" (More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. o2v).

[95] In his preface to the *Great Bible*, Cranmer discussed the power of custom and how it obscures peoples' perceptions of change and development, thus giving rise to Goody's homeostatic society [Thomas Cranmer, *The Byble in Englyshe, that is to saye the contēt of al the holy scrypture, both of ye[the] olde, and newe testamēt, with a prologue therinto, made by the reuerende father in God, Thomas archbishop of Cantorbury* (London, Whitchurch, 1540), sig. ╬1r].

sense of change and of cultural lag; another is the notion that the cultural inheritance as a whole is composed of two very different kinds of material; fiction, error, and superstition on the one hand, and on the other, elements of truth which can provide the basis for some more reliable and coherent explanation of the gods, the human past and the physical world."[96] Although Tyndale perceived More's unwritten traditions to be full of just such "fiction, error, and superstition," he could not appreciate fully the role of printing in bringing these more clearly to light.

As such, Tyndale tended to explain the unwillingness of the church to acknowledge corruption as proof of malicious intent. In his *Practice of Prelates*, published in 1530 to weigh in on the issue of Henry VIII's divorce, he saw conspiracy and duplicity everywhere. He argued that the pope and his cardinals had been responsible for provoking most of the wars between European states to increase the power and influence of the church.[97] Even more troubling, he suggests that the clergy had knowingly introduced false doctrines.[98] Why, he wondered, was the church so against printed vernacular scripture? In his mind, there could be only one explanation—"I can imagen no cause verily excepte it be that we shulde not se the worke of Antychrist and iugulynge of ypocrites."[99] This interpretation of the contemporary situation was echoed in the writings of almost all of Tyndale's fellow reformers and it influenced the perceptions of their readers. It seems undeniable that the capacity of more readily available printed sources to highlight incongruities between the past and the church's traditions, vernacular Bibles among them, was a strong contributing factor in a declining confidence in the reliability of the church.[100]

A more extensive consideration of the impact of printing and print culture also provides insight into a second major point of disagreement between Tyndale and More noted in the previous chapter, how scripture itself should be interpreted. Traditional Catholic exegesis, since at least the time of Origen, had recognized four levels of meaning in the biblical text: the literal, the allegorical, the moral, and the

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[96] Goody, "The Consequences of Literacy," 326.
[97] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. F7v.
[98] Ibid., sig. E7r.
[99] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. B4v.
[100] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided, 1490–1700* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 74.

anagogical.[101] These "four senses" are concisely expressed in a famous distich quoted by Nicholas of Lyra around 1330, "littera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria, moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia."[102] In his *Summa Theologica*, Thomas Aquinas had described the same divisions a century earlier, although he insisted upon a more fundamental distinction between the literal or historical sense on one hand and the spiritual sense—under which he subsumed the allegorical, moral, and anagogical—on the other.[103]

Tyndale consistently expressed suspicion concerning this medieval Catholic approach to exegesis. He argued that all too often these supposed layers of meaning had served as a mechanism whereby the clergy had obscured the truths of scripture and defended their own traditions. In a section of *Obedience* devoted specifically to this issue he complained that the "literall sence is become nothīge at all" and that "twenty doctours expounde one texte .xx. wayes."[104] These are, of course, polemical exaggerations. Aquinas, echoing Augustine, had argued just as consistently as the sixteenth-century reformers for the priority of the literal sense, asserting that "nothing necessary to faith is contained under the spiritual sense which is not elsewhere put forward clearly by the Scripture in its literal sense."[105] Likewise, Tyndale's Catholic opponents did not hesitate to point out the inability of

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[101] As an example of the application of the four senses, consider Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. While in the Old Testament period it was a physical structure which served as the center of Jewish worship (literal sense), the temple is understood in the New Testament with reference to Jesus (allegorical sense), to the Christian believer (moral sense), and to heaven (anagogical sense) (cf. 1 Kings 6, John 2:19–21, 1 Corinthians 6:19, and Revelation 21:22).

[102] Jane McAuliffe, Barry Walfish, and Joseph Goering, eds., *With Reverence for the Word: Medieval Scriptural Exegesis in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 225, 232. In his essay for this collection, entitled "The Four 'Senses' and Four Exegetes", Edward Synan offers the following loose translation of the couplet, "The letter teaches what's been done; allegory—your belief; moral—what you ought to do; anagogy—where you'll get relief" (Ibid., 225). Less poetically, the four senses refer respectively to "things that have happened, religious truths to be believed, moral guidelines, and eschatology" [Ineke van't Spijker, ed., *The Multiple Meanings of Scripture: The Role of Exegesis in Early-Christian and Medieval Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 155].

[103] Anton C. Pegis, ed., *Introduction to Saint Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Random House, 1948), 18.

[104] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. R1v, R5r.

[105] Pegis, *Introduction to Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 19.

the reformers to reach agreement about what particular passages of scripture meant.[106]

Tyndale's emphasis on the literal sense was closely related to his belief, expressed throughout his writings, that the ordinary Christian believer was qualified to discover the truths of scripture for himself and his production of vernacular translations was predicated on this belief.[107] As we have seen, Thomas More was much more skeptical about the interpretive abilities of the laity and warned that many parts of scripture would not "agree wyth theyr capacytees," this despite the fact that More was himself a layman.[108] Tyndale strongly disagreed and argued that anyone properly instructed could determine the literal sense of almost any passage of scripture. He explained his method of exegesis to potential readers in the *epilogue* to his Worms New Testament in 1526 when he wrote, "Marke the playne ād manifest places of the scriptures and in doutfull places se thou adde no interpretaciō contrary to them."[109] According to Tyndale, this is just what the clergy fail to do when they "rete & tere the scripture with there distīcciōs ād expoūde thē violently cōtrarie to the meanīge of the text & to the circumstāces that go before & after & to a thousand clear & evidēte texts."[110]

His comments on the literal sense suggest that Tyndale was part of a broader tradition of "Renaissance humanists and Reformation critics…[who] insisted on…stripping away from the authoritative texts…all medieval accretions and apparatus, thus leaving individuals free to interpret the texts for themselves."[111] His position constitutes a commonsense defense of the average reader's encounter with the plain words of scripture. However, Tyndale's insistence that "scripture hath but one sence which is y^{e} literall sence" is not without complications.[112] All reading involves interpretation and various levels of meaning seem inevitably to surface. Tyndale is forced to acknowledge that "the scripture useth proverbes, similitudes, redels [i.e. riddles],

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[106] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. o2v.

[107] Indeed, Tyndale argued that the laity might be more reliable interpreters of scripture than clergymen trained in universities that "nosell them in sophistry…[and] corrupte thei their iudgemēte with apparente argumētes and…textes of logycke…and all maner bokes of Aristotle" (Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. C2v).

[108] More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresy*, sig. Q8v.

[109] Tyndale, *New Testament* (1526), sig. Ttlv.

[110] Tyndale, *Wicked Mammon*, sig. A6v. Both Tyndale and More believed that the "clear and evident texts" were on their side.

[111] McAuliffe, *With Reverence for the Word*, 197.

[112] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. R1v.

or allegories as all other speaches doo," although he asserts that "that which the proverb, similitude, redell or allegory signifieth is ever the literall sence."[113] This explanation is simply insufficient in many cases, such as for Christological readings of Old Testament passages.[114] Tyndale does not seem to have recognized the "hermeneutical leap" involved whenever one moves from the literal to the spiritual level of interpretation.[115]

Tyndale's respect for the literal sense arose not only from his hermeneutics; it can also be linked to changes in the experience of reading brought about by the advent of printing. Prior to the production of relatively cheap and widely distributed printed Bibles, few individuals would have encountered scripture as a unified whole.[116] Recall the opening lines of Beryl Smalley's influential *Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (1964), "The Bible was the most studied book of the Middle Ages… the language and content of Scripture permeated medieval thought."[117] While this may have been true, even among the clergy only the most fortunate could hope to own or read scripture in the form of a single volume. When people could read the New Testament from cover to cover or even simply flip backwards or forwards a few pages, a sense of context and of the literal historical message became more evident.

In addition, with the advent of printing average men and women began to experience scripture in a new way that tended to encourage personal interpretation rather than dogmatic acceptance of tradition. For many readers, the acquisition of a Tyndale New Testament represented a movement not just from the written to the printed word, but directly from oral culture to print culture. The printed biblical text had an enduring material reality that a sermon, previously the major

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[113] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. R2r.

[114] Jesus modeled such Christological readings when, on the road to Emmaus, he "began at Moses, and at all the prophetes, and interpreted unto them… all scriptures which were written of him" (Tyndale's rendering of Luke 24:27 in his 1526 Worms New Testament).

[115] A phrase coined by Gilbert Dahan (Spijker, *The Multiple Meanings of Scripture*, 155).

[116] As Richard Marius observed of Erasmus' *Novum Instrumentum*, "[it] drew widespread attention to the Bible, or at least to the New Testament, as a *book*, as no other Bible had done" (Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography*, 237). The same could be said of Tyndale's pocket-sized New Testament, although it had the added advantage that it was in English.

[117] Smalley, *Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages, xi.*

source of biblical knowledge for the laity, could not. English church leaders were clearly aware of this distinction. Nicholas Watson has observed that the *Constitutions of Oxford*, anti-Lollard legislation from the early fifteenth century, allowed pastors to translate and expound scriptural passages in their sermons but forbade any written vernacular scripture as being too subject to misinterpretation.[118] The Catholic Church seems to have concluded that the spoken word was safer than the written word when it came to public consumption.

Walter Ong argues in his essay on "Reading, Technology, and the Nature of Man," that reading is fundamentally different than listening as it allows the individual over time to "actualize…potential meanings (implicit, unconscious, etc.) submerged in the text."[119] Printing, in that it frequently increased the distance between author and audience, further exacerbated this tendency towards personal interpretation of texts. It was recognition of this byproduct of print culture that would make the poet John Donne hesitate to publish his poems later in the sixteenth century. As Richard Wollman explained, "[H]e was not afraid of the physical survival of his poems but of the proliferation of misinterpretations by his readers."[120] Thomas More's great fear was that if "euery symple person [were] bolde to take himself for an interpreter," many would wander from orthodoxy into heresy, a far more serious matter than misinterpreting poetry.[121] More frequently pointed out that the reformers did not even seem to be able to agree among themselves concerning what scripture so clearly said.[122] It is clear that the subjectivity introduced by privileging the individual reader's interpretation of scripture worried More greatly.

Tyndale, meanwhile, downplayed the divisions between reformers. He remained confident that if medieval accretions were stripped away and the plain text of scripture was set before the English people, true

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[118] Nicholas Watson, "Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel's Constitutions of 1409," *Speculum*, Vol. 70, No. 4 (1995): 828.

[119] Walter Ong, "Reading, Technology, and the Nature of Man: An Interpretation," *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Vol. 10 (1980): 134.

[120] Richard Wollman, "The 'Press and the Fire': Print and Manuscript Culture in Donne's Circle," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, Vol. 33, No. 1, *The English Renaissance* (1993): 88.

[121] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. O4v.

[122] Ibid., sig. o2v.

Spirit-filled believers would be able to reach agreement on the fundamental truths of scripture. This naïve optimism seems to have been shared at some point by most of the reformers of the early sixteenth century. However, over time it became evident that readers could not be relied upon to interpret scripture as the leading reformers wished. The reclericalization of Protestantism was in part a reaction to this reality. Luther would instruct the layman, "You ought to listen to the pastor not as a man but as God."[123] This statement is clearly at odds with Tyndale's understanding of the clergy as described in the previous chapter and appears to undermine the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Unlike some of his contemporaries, Tyndale did not live long enough to see just how fragmented Protestantism would become, although the process was already well underway by the time of his death in the mid 1530s.

Finally, it could be argued that even Tyndale's conception of the church as a congregation of individual believers was influenced by his experience of and engagement with print culture. Among many other criticisms, More condemned Tyndale's ecclesiology because, in rejecting a definition of the church tied to the administration of the sacraments, it seemed that he must fall back on "a certayne secrete scattered congregacyon vnknowen to all the worlde."[124] This was simply untenable to More for whom the possibility of certainty was indelibly tied to the authority of the Catholic Church. Tyndale, on the other hand, believed that the church was not made up of all members of society baptized in their infancy. Instead, the true church was a subset of that total population—"the cōgregacion of them that beleve."[125] For Tyndale such a church need not be entirely invisible as More feared because the distribution of standardized printed vernacular Bibles and commentaries by reformers abroad allowed for the creation of new forms of "textual community."[126] Although Tyndale envisioned the day when the reformed church would be centered on the local parish,

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[123] Quoted in Paul Avis, *The Church in the Theology of the Reformers* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 92.

[124] Thomas More, *The second parte of the cōfutacion of Tyndals answere* (London, William Rastell, 1533), sig. A1.

[125] Tyndale, *New Testament* (1526), sig. Tt2v.

[126] I borrow the term loosely from Brian Stock's *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretations in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

the church as he actually experienced it was just such a dispersed community, constituted and held together primarily by the circulation of books, most importantly the Bible in English.[127]

V. *Conclusion*

Cathy Davidson has observed, "A book exists, simultaneously, as a physical object, a sign system, the end product of diverse arts and labors, and the starting point for intercultural and intracultural communication."[128] This chapter has argued that in order to understand both the context and the content of the polemical exchange between William Tyndale and Thomas More, the various dimensions of the book must be taken into consideration. The historiography of the Reformation has been and often remains highly confessional. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that it is beyond the purview of the historian as historian to judge the theology of the past.[129] By examining the material manifestations of religious ideas, the history of their production and distribution, and the profound implications of these material forms on their content and reception, however, one can see how the medium and message of the reformers were united in powerful new ways that worked against their Catholic opponents.[130]

Despite these disadvantages, the conservative secular and ecclesiastical authorities arrayed against Tyndale and his associates had the power of the state on their side.[131] That so few original copies of Tyndale's

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[127] Marius has observed of Tyndale's church, "Men like himself could not formulate the importance of a powerful, objective institution because there was just nothing around which might fulfill such an institutional demand on their part." The church as Tyndale conceived it was un-institutional/anti-hierarchical and, as Marius notes, "We may be sure that this is the way he experienced his own communities of co-religionists in most of his peregrinations from hiding place to hiding place to the end of his wandering life" (More, "Thomas More's View of the Church," 1289).

[128] Cathy Davidson, "Towards a History of Books and Readers," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (1988): 7.

[129] Christopher Morris' comment that "[f]ew impartial observers would allow that he [More] won his battles with Tyndale" represents an older school of thought with which most historians would now be extremely uncomfortable [Christopher Morris, *Political Thought in England: Tyndale to Hooker* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 127]. We now question if such impartial observers even exist.

[130] Edwards, *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther*, 57.

[131] For Tyndale, the use of such strong measures against the reformers was itself a sign of the illegitimate mixing of the spiritual and temporal regiments; in the spiritual regiment, the realm of the soul and of individuals' beliefs, "the bearynge of rule…

works, particularly his biblical translations, survive is evidence of the effectiveness of the campaign against heresy that More spearheaded. Louis Schuster has observed, "Before the end of 1531, Chancellor More had curbed the infiltration of proscribed books so dramatically that the brethren in England had been reduced to manuscript reproduction of brief tracts."[132] Two years later in his *Letter against Frith*, More would note the same phenomenon—"[they] make many shorte treatyses, whereof theyr scolers may shortly write out copyes."[133] This activity among the Brethren reminds us of the important fact that the boundaries between oral, manuscript, and print culture remained fluid throughout the period, as they do today.

At times, the reformers complained about the treatment they received at the hands of their opponents, particularly More.[134] However, they also seem to have believed that it was inevitable that those who preach the Word and follow Christ would suffer persecution.[135] It was the burning of the New Testament that seems to have produced the most visceral reaction. In the second book of his *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, More remarked that in every "English book of heresy sent hither…ever more one piece of their complaint hath been the burning of Tyndale's testament."[136] Even a quick survey of the writings of the reformers confirms More's observation. James Barlow and William Roye, in their *Rede me and be nott wrothe*, decried the "villany / Th[e]y did vnto the gospel" when authorities "sett hym [the New Testament] a fyre."[137] George Joye implored, "Burne nomore goddis worde: but

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is cleane contrarye vnto the bearinge of rule temporallye…that requyreth violence to compell with all" (Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. A8v).

[132] Schuster, "Thomas More's Polemical Career," 1251.

[133] Thomas More, *A letter of syr Tho. More knyght impugnynge the erronyouse wrytyng of Iohn fryth agaynst the blessed sacrament of the aultare* (London. W. Rastell, 1533), sig. a2v.

[134] More declared, "Dyuers of them haue sayd that of suche as were in my howse whyle I was chauncellour, I vsed to examyne them wyth turmentes, causynge them to be boūden to a tre in my garden, & there pituously beten" (More, *Apology of Sir Thomas More*, sig. Dd3r–v). He denied that he had ever behaved so cruelly.

[135] Robert Barnes, *A supplication made by Robert Barnes doctoure in diuinite, vnto the most excellent and redoubted prince kinge henrye the eyght* (Antwerp, Simon Cock, 1531), sig. A3v.

[136] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. m4r.

[137] William Roye & Jerome Barlow, *Rede me and be nott wrothe for I saye no thyne but trothe* (Strasbourg, 1528), sig. C2r.

mēde it where it is not truly translated."[138] For Tyndale, the burning of the scriptures was the final proof that his Catholic opponents, "them that furiously burne all trueth," were the forces of Antichrist.[139]

That the movement for reform, which revisionists such as Christopher Haigh and Eamon Duffy have demonstrated was the work of a small minority, was not crushed is largely a product of the fact that the authorities did not present a united front.[140] Indeed, at the very height of his anti-heresy campaign, More found himself progressively more at odds with his own sovereign. In the early 1520s, More had warned Henry to moderate his praise of the powers of the papacy lest he one day find himself at odds with the pope.[141] A decade later, as the king's "great matter" became the central concern at court, More's prediction was realized. Even as More sought to answer the writings of Tyndale and his associates, Cromwell—through his agent Stephen Vaughn—was working to recruit them for the king's cause. As More devoted his energy to defending Catholic traditions, other elements of the regime were patronizing books that undermined those traditions. By May 1532, the situation had become so untenable that More chose or was forced to resign the chancellorship.[142] Three year later, he would

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[138] George Joye, *The Prophete Isaye, translated into englysshe, by George Joye* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1531), sig. A7v.

[139] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. P3r. Foreshadowing Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor by more than three centuries, Tyndale declared that the burning of the New Testament by the bishops was "an evident signe verily that they wold have brunte Christe himselfe also if they had had him" (Ibid., sig. J1r). For further discussion see my article "'Them that furiously burn all truth': The Impact of Bible-Burning on William Tyndale's Understanding of his Translation Project and Identity" *Moreana*, Vol. 45, No. 175 (December 2008): 147–160.

[140] Major revisionist works include J.J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (New York: Blackwell, 1984); Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c. 1400–c. 1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Katherine French, *The People of the Parish: Community Life in a Late Medieval English Diocese* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

[141] Rogers, *Thomas More: Selected Letters*, 212.

[142] Although More claimed that his resignation was prompted by health concerns, no one with direct knowledge of the situation at court believed this to be the case. Eustace Chapuys, the imperial ambassador, wrote to the emperor, "The Chancellor has resigned, seeing that affairs were going so badly, and likely to be worse, and that if he retained his office he would be obliged to act against his conscience or incur the King's displeasure, as he had already begun to do, for refusing to take his part against the clergy" [Quoted in William Rockett, "The Case against Thomas More," *Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (2008): 1065].

be executed as a traitor against the monarchy that he had faithfully served. These events reflect the complex political situation that lay behind the texts we have been considering. The following chapter will explore this context and the intricate maneuvers of competing factions at court, in England more generally, and on the Continent.

CHAPTER FOUR

THOMAS MORE AND HENRY VIII AT CROSS-PURPOSES

I. *The English Situation in Early 1532: More's* Confutation *Preface*

On July 23, 1529, Cardinal Campeggio adjourned the legatine court which had been considering Henry VIII's request for a divorce from Catherine of Aragon and transferred the case to Rome.[1] This development contributed directly to Thomas Wolsey's fall from power and to the elevation of Thomas More to the position of Lord Chancellor on October 25. It also contributed to Henry's decision to summon what would become known as the Reformation Parliament, a body that would sit from November 1529 until April 1536 and which would radically change the course of English political and religious history. In his classic work, *The Early Tudor Theory of Kingship*, Franklin Le Van Baumer divided the transformative years that followed into four phases.[2] During the first period, which lasted from 1529 until 1531, the focus of Parliament and the government was perceived abuse within the Catholic Church in England. The second period, in 1532, was "one of hesitation."[3] Henry still hoped that Clement VII (r. 1523–1534) might be persuaded to grant his divorce. However, the discovery that Anne Boleyn was pregnant with what Henry hoped would be a legitimate male heir led the king to move forward. In this third phase in 1533, the government took decisive steps that fundamentally altered England's relationship with the papacy. On March 30, 1533, Thomas Cranmer was consecrated as the

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[1] The pope's unwillingness to grant Henry's request for a divorce was primarily a result of the influence of Emperor Charles V, who was Catherine's nephew. Charles had effectively controlled Rome and thus the pope since his forces sacked the papal city in 1527. The decision to adjourn the divorce trial in the summer of 1529 was probably precipitated by the imperial defeat of the French at the Battle of Landriano in June of that year [Richard Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 357].

[2] Franklin Le Van Baumer, *The Early Tudor Theory of Kingship* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), 26.

[3] Ibid., 26.

new Archbishop of Canterbury.[4] During this same period, Parliament passed and Henry enacted the Act in Restraint of Appeals, which famously declared England an empire and thus sovereign and not subject to external authorities. On May 23, Cranmer declared Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon invalid and on June 1, Anne was proclaimed queen.[5] In 1534, England entered its fourth and most revolutionary phase when a series of legislative acts would institute the royal supremacy.

In early 1532, however, most of these tumultuous events were still in the future and it was unclear what Henry VIII intended to do next, a situation leading one modern scholar to observed the "seemingly contradictory attitudes and actions of the authorities" during this period.[6] The uncertainties of this year are perhaps best illustrated by the preface of Thomas More's *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, probably finished in the first few months of 1532 and published soon after by William Rastell. The *Confutation* was More's third English polemical work, after his *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* and *Supplication of Souls* of 1529, but the first new work he had found time to publish since assuming the duties of chancellor more than two years earlier in October 1529. More's evaluation of the situation in England in these thirty-seven pages reflects both his successes in his efforts to counter English heretics and the growing rift between More and his master Henry VIII. Despite More's attempt to preserve the appearance of a united front, his preface reveals the emergence of contradictory agendas and objectives among England's religious and political authorities in the face of the heretical threat.

Earlier efforts to deal with the spread of heretical works from the Continent had not been very effective. In October of 1526, Cuthbert Tunstal had warned London booksellers of the consequences of par-

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[4] The standard work on Cranmer is Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996). News of Cranmer's elevation soon reached the reformers abroad. In a letter to Hugh Latimer dated April 29, 1533, George Joye said of the new archbishop, "he is in a perellose place but yet in a gloriose place to plant the gospell" [quoted in Charles Butterworth and Allan Chester, *George Joye, 1495?–1553: A Chapter in the History of the England Bible and the English Reformation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962), 96].

[5] Mortimer Levine, "Henry VIII's Use of His Spiritual and Temporal Jurisdictions in His Great Causes of Matrimony, Legitimacy, and Succession," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (1967): 5.

[6] William Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants 1525–1535* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 101.

ticipating in the illicit distribution of heretical books, particularly Tyndale's New Testament. The burning of seized copies at Paul's Cross a few days later on October 28 was largely a symbolic gesture, since the government could have collected only a few copies by that date.[7] Meanwhile, John Hackett, who was charged with discovering the source of the new vernacular Bibles, was experiencing difficulties abroad. He wrote a letter to Cardinal Wolsey on December 22, 1526, in which he complained that the town authorities in Antwerp were refusing to act aggressively against heretical works or their printers.[8] Another strategy of church authorities during these early years was actually to buy heretical works in order to burn them.[9] The account of Bishop Tunstal's attempt in the summer of 1529 to buy up New Testaments from Augustine Packington while traveling on the Continent, preserved in Edward Hall's *Chronicle*, reveals the counterproductive nature of such efforts, which probably only increased demand and spurred the production of pirated editions.[10] For example, between 1526 and 1534, the press of Christopher Endhoven was responsible for four editions, numbering perhaps nine thousand copies.[11] The government's scheme seems to have radically underestimated the scale of the problem and the ease with which additional English Bibles could be produced.

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[7] For detailed discussion of this initial burning of Tyndale's New Testament refer to J.F. Mozley, *William Tyndale* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1937), 117.

[8] Alfred Pollard, ed., *Records of the English Bible: The Documents Relating to the Translation and Publication of the Bible in English, 1525–1611* (London: Oxford University Press, 1911), 137–140. Guido Latré provides an explanation for how and why Antwerp became the major center for the production of English reformist literature in the 1520s and 1530s in his essay "William Tyndale: Reformer of a Culture, Preserver of a Language, Translator for the Ploughboy," in Paul Arblaster, Gergely Juhász, and Guido Latré, eds., *Tyndale's Testament* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003).

[9] Richard Nix, Bishop of Norwich, wrote to Archbishop Warham in June 1527 pledging financial support for such a scheme (Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, 153).

[10] Edward Hall, *Hall's Chronicle; Containing the History of England, During the Reign of Henry the Fourth, and the Succeeding Monarchs, to the End of the reign of Henry Eighth* (London: Printed by J. Johnson, 1809), 762–763. Louis Schuster suggests that Hall's garbled account may actually refer to earlier efforts to implement Warham's plan [Louis Schuster, "Thomas More's Polemical Career, 1523–1533," in Louis Schuster, Richard Marius, James Lusardi, and Richard Schoeck, eds., *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More, Vol. 8, Pt. III* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 1168–1169].

[11] George Joye, *An apolgye made by George Ioye to satisfye (if it maye be) w. Tindale* (London, John Byddell, 1535), sig. C3r–C4r. A modern parallel would be the efforts of various governments to buy up weapons in order to take them out of circulation, a dubious proposition.

Meanwhile, evidence that heresy was gaining a foothold in England continued to mount. In November 1527, Wolsey sent letters to Cambridge commanding several individuals suspected of holding heretical beliefs to appear at Westminster, among them Thomas Bilney and George Joye.[12] Only three months later, a group sympathetic to Luther was discovered in Oxford, in fact, among the promising young scholars Wolsey had recruited to staff his newly founded Cardinal College. Foxe records that the members of this group, among them the young John Frith, were imprisoned on Wolsey's orders in the college's fish-cellar where several later died.[13] Such troubling signs were not limited to the universities. In these same months, Robert Necton, George Constantine, and Simon Fish were all busy distributing forbidden books in the capital in the very shadow of Tunstal's episcopal palace.

It was the growing realization of the ineffectiveness of existing efforts to stem the tide of heresy that motivated Tunstal to appoint Thomas More the official champion of the Catholic cause in early March of 1528.[14] His elevation as chancellor the following year further increased More's resources and his reach. The oath that More may have sworn before he assumed his new office would only have increased his zeal and his sense of duty:

> the chancellor, treasurer of England, the justice of the one bench and the other, justices of the peace, sheriffs, mayors, and bailiffs of cities and towns, and other officers having governance of the people… shall make oath in taking their charge and ministration to give their whole power and diligence to put away and to make utterly to cease, and destroy all manner of heresies and errors, commonly called Lollardies, within the precincts of their offices and administrations, from time to time, with all their power.[15]

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[12] Joye would later recount the experience, which ultimately led him to flee the country, in his work *The letters which Johnn Ashwel Priour of Newnham Abbey… sente secretely to the Bishope of Lyncolne* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1531{?}), beginning on sig. C8v.

[13] John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments of these latter and perilous dayes* (London, John Day, 1563), 497.

[14] More had already assumed an active role in the battle against heresy through his Latin writings against Luther. He had also led a raid against the Hanse merchants in London's Steelyard in January 1526 to search for contraband Lutheran works.

[15] Quoted in Paul Hughes and James Larkin, eds., *Tudor Royal Proclamations, Volume 1: The Early Tudors (1485–1553)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 184. This new oath was created by a royal proclamation that Hughes and Larkin date to the spring of 1529. Elton argues that this proclamation was actually produced in

In his *Supplication of Souls*, published shortly before he became chancellor, More had spoken of "the good & gracyouse catholyke mynde…borne by the kynges hyghnes to the catholyk fayth" and had appealed to Henry's title "defensoure of the fayth gyvē his grace by the see apostolyque."[16] With the apparent support of both ecclesiastical and secular authorities, More was ideally placed to spearhead the campaign against the English reformers.

More's approach to fighting heresy was different than that of Wolsey.[17] More focused his energies on the network within England that supported the exiled reformers and distributed their works, a loose association that More referred to as the Brethren.[18] As he noted in the *Confutation* preface, "These felowes that naught had here, and therfore noughte caryed hense, nor nothynge fyndynge there to lyue vppon be yet sustayned and mayntened wyth monye sent them by some euyll dysposed persones oute of this realme thyther."[19] Even before his appointment as chancellor, More had begun to investigate the nature of the reformers' network. Robert Necton's confession in May 1528 provided a wealth of information about the channels through which heretical books passed on their way from the Continent to the streets of London.[20] That same month, More was involved in questioning the

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1530, pointing to the inclusion of several titles in its list of heretical works that had not been published in 1529 [G.R. Elton, *Policy and Police: The Enforcement of the Reformation in the Age of Thomas Cromwell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 218–219]. It may be that the text printed by Hughes and Larkin is a composite text, an earlier proclamation that has been amended and reissued.

[16] Thomas More, *A supplcacyon of soulys made by syr Thomas More knight* (London, William Rastell, 1529), sig. E1r, E4r.

[17] Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants*, 280.

[18] Thomas More, *The apologye of syr Thomas More knyght* (London, William Rastell, 1533), sig. C1r. How well organized and how stable the membership of this network was remains open for debate, particularly once one looks beyond its core of active participants, whose names appear most frequently in contemporary sources. Roland Worth has noted that "[t]he actually documentable names of suspected heretics at this point [in the 1520s] is very small—perhaps as low as 50 Lutheran types and in the low hundreds for Lollard types, if it reached even that high" [Roland Worth, *Church, Monarch and Bible in Sixteenth Century England: The Political Context of Biblical Translation* (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2000), 27]. That thousands of English Bibles were produced and distributed demonstrates that popular interest in vernacular scriptures was much more extensive than these small numbers might suggest.

[19] Thomas More, *The cōfutacyon of Tyndales answere made by Thomas More knght lorde chaūcellor of Englonde* (London, William Rastell, 1532), sig. Bb2v.

[20] John Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials, relating chiefly to religion, and the reformation of it, and the emergence of the Church of England, under King Henry VIII.*

prominent London merchant Humphrey Monmouth, who confessed that he had met William Tyndale "iiii yeres and a half past" and that the translator had even lived in his home for six months.[21] Monmouth was one source of continuing financial support for English reformers living abroad.[22] From sources such as these, More was able to begin compiling a list of the names of those with whom the exiled reformers were in contact.

During his time as chancellor, More continued to increase his knowledge of the Brethren's network, both through informants and the interrogation of those he apprehended. Particularly useful was the information he was able to obtain from the colporteur George Constantine, whom More questioned in the fall of 1531.[23] More declared in the preface to his *Confutation*, "he not onely detected . . . hys owne dedes & his felowes, but also studyed and deuysed how those deuelysshe bokes, whyche hym selfe and other of hys felowes hadde brought and shypped, myghte come to the bysshoppes handes."[24] From Constantine, More learned the secret marks that identified the fardels (bundles of cloth) in which unbound sheets were smuggled into the country. Constantine's testimony also led directly to the apprehension of several leading members of England's religious underground. By the time More wrote the preface to the *Confutation* in early 1532, Constantine had escaped by breaking out of the stocks and climbing over the wall of More's home in Chelsea where he was being kept.[25] More held Constantine up both as an example of the willingness of

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King Edward VI. And Queen Mary I: Appendix: Containing Records, Letters, and other Original Writings, Referred to in the Memorials under the reign of King Henry VIII (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1822), Vol. I, Pt. II, 63–65.

[21] Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, Vol. I. Pt. II, 363–368. For Tyndale's own account of this period when he was in London seeking the patronage of Cuthbert Tunstal, see William Tyndale, *The first book of Moses called Genesis* {*The Pentateuch*} (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1530), sig. A3r–4r. For additional discussion of Monmouth, refer to David Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 102–107.

[22] Monmouth was an influential London alderman and cloth merchant with connections to the Lollard community and with an interest in the writings of Luther [Bard Thompson, *Humanists & Reformers: A History of the Renaissance and the Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 548].

[23] Necton had identified Constantine as a major player in the distribution of English New Testaments several years earlier (Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, Vol. I. Pt. II, 63).

[24] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. Cc2r.

[25] More described Constantine's escape two years later in his *Apology* (More, *Apology*, sig. Ee2v–3r).

heretics to recant their opinions at the slightest threat of punishment and of their untrustworthiness. In his preface, More warned all honest and orthodox Englishmen to avoid Constantine's company.[26]

Notwithstanding Constantine's escape, More's campaign against heretics was showing important signs of success by early 1532 when his *Confutation* was issued. The previous year had witnessed the executions of many prominent leaders among the Brethren. More's preface celebrates some of these achievements. Thomas Bilney, one of the earliest to take up the evangelical cause at Cambridge, had been burned in Norwich in August 1531. Richard Bayfield and John Tewkesbury were both executed in December of that year. More sought to use these cases to ultimate polemical advantage. In particular, he dwelt on the fact that Bilney had recanted his heretical beliefs and had received the Eucharist before his death. More even imagined him in heaven praying for the repentance and amendment of his former associates.[27] The chancellor also reported that Bilney was particularly remorseful "for the contempnyng of Crystes catholyke knowen chyrche, and the framynge of a secrete vnknowen chyrche… the very fundacyon wheruppon all other heresyes are byelded," ideas he had learned from Tyndale.[28] More's comment reveals both his belief that Tyndale was the most influential of the English reformers and that it was his radical ecclesiology that constituted the greatest threat to the Catholic Church.

Despite these various successes, the preface to More's *Confutation* also reveals clear evidence that England was far from secure. The number of heretical books that might mislead the people was increasing despite a string of official prohibitions.[29] More contributed his own list of more than twenty titles in the opening pages of his new work. Although he was able to stem this flow somewhat, he still complained, "Of these bokes of heresyes there be so many made with in these few yeres… that y^{e} bare names of those bokes were almoste inough to

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[26] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. Cc1r. Constantine's position among the reformers was also severely undermined by his apparent willingness to betray others to save himself. Richard Marius suggests that Constantine was probably responsible for rumors about More's cruelty to prisoners in an effort to justify his own actions (Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography*, 402–404).

[27] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. Dd1r.

[28] Ibid., sig. Cc8v.

[29] For discussion of lists of prohibited books from this period see Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants*, 263–269. David Loades has also produced a more general study of Tudor censorship and the difficulties authorities faced [David Loades, *Politics, Censorship and the English Reformation* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1991)].

make a boke."[30] Although More insisted that his enemies represented only a small and perverse minority, he nevertheless had to contend with the natural appeal of the forbidden and with general, if not necessarily heretical, anticlericalism.[31] In London, in particular, the events surrounding the death of Richard Hunne on December 4, 1514, continued to provide fuel to the fires of anticlerical sentiment and More returned to the case throughout his writings.[32]

The Hunne case also reveals a second difficulty that More and the authorities faced. Even the execution or death of heretics did not mean that they were necessarily neutralized as a threat. There was the danger that they could then be proclaimed martyrs for the cause of the reformers. In the preface to his *Confutation*, More recognized this possibility and sought to counter it by portraying those who had been executed as unworthy of any admiration. He declared, "Tyndale hath no greate cause to glory of hys martyrs when that theyr lyuyng is openly nought, theyr opynyons suche hym selfe wyll abhorre, they redy to adiure agayne yf it myght saue theyr lyfe."[33] Already by 1532, English Protestant hagiography, most commonly associated with the works of John Foxe (1517–1587) three decades later, was actively being cultivated. One of the first evangelicals to be executed was Thomas Hitton, who was burned in Kent in February 1530. Later that year, his name would appear in the calendar in George Joye's English primer, the *Ortulus anime*.[34] Tyndale also praised Hitton as a true

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[30] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. Aa3v. More was making reference to both English heretical literature and heretical works produced in other languages.

[31] Christopher St. German's *Diuision betwene the spirytualtie and the temporaltie* (1532), which was written by one of England's leading legal thinkers and which would provoke a rebuttal the following year in More's *Apology*, is one prominent example of strong anticlericalism that was not inherently heretical.

[32] Church authorities claimed that Hunne had committed suicide while in prison awaiting a trial for heresy, but evidence soon emerged to suggest foul play. For more on the Hunne case and its significance, see Jeffries Davis, "The Authorities for the Case of Richard Hunne (1514–1515)," *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 30, No. 119 (1915): 477–488; A.G. Dickens' discussion in *The English Reformation* (London: Batsford, 1964); Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography*, 123–141; and Gordon McBride, "Once Again, the Case of Richard Hunne," *Albion*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1969): 19–29. For More's statements on Hunne, see for example Thomas More, *A dyaloge of syr Thomas More knyghte… touchyng the pestilent secte of Luther & Tyndale* (London, John Rastell, 1529), beginning on sig. Q1v.

[33] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. Dd1r.

[34] George Joye, *Ortulus anime. The garden of the soule* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1530). See Butterworth, *George Joye*, 61–63, and Charles Butterworth, *The English Primers (1529–1545): Their Publication and Connection with the English Bible and the*

martyr in his *Practice of Prelates* (1530) and in his *Answer to More's Dialogue* (1531).[35] More was outraged and spent several pages of his *Confutation* preface documenting Hitton's heresies.[36]

In the midst of the various difficulties that More faced in his struggle against heresy early in 1532, one piece of evidence preserved in the opening pages of his *Confutation* is most revealing. Among the proscribed works More condemns is Robert Barnes' *Supplication*, printed by Simon Cock in Antwerp in the fall of 1531.[37] Here More interrupts his list to make the following comment:

> frere Barns…is at this daye comen to the realme by saufe conducte, whyche at his humble suyte the kynges hyghnesse of his blessed disposycyon condescended to graũte hym to thende that yf there myght yet any sparke of grace be founden in hym, yt myghte be kepte, kyndeled, and encreaced…he shall I am sure haue leue to departe saufe, accordynge to the kynges saufe conducte. And yet hath he so demeaned hym selfe synnys hys comynge hyther that he hath clerely broken & forsayted hys conducte, and lawfully myghte be burned for hys heresyes.[38]

That Barnes, one of the leading English reformers, should have been offered a safe conduct by Henry VIII, the defender of the faith, seems at odds with More's entire picture of the unanimous opposition of

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Reformation in England (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1953). The *Ortulus anime* is the earliest surviving English primer, a revision of Joye's first effort the previous year.

[35] Tyndale declared near the end of *The Practice of Prelates*, "More amonge his other blasphemies in his Dialoge sayth that none of vs dare abyde by oure faythe vnto the deeth: but shortlye therafter god to proue More that he hath euer bene euer a false lyare gaue strẽgth vnto his servaũt syr Thomas Hitton to confesse and that vnto the deeth the fayth of his holye sonne Jesus" [William Tyndale, *The practyse of Prelates. Whether the Kinges grace maye be separated from hys queen, be cause she was his brothers wyfe* (Antwerp, Hoochstraten, 1530), sig. R6r]. Tyndale also repeated More's claim in the letter he wrote to John Frith in May 1533 [Quoted in C.H. Williams, *William Tyndale* (London: Nelson, 1969), 32–33]. William Tyndale, *An answere vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge made by Vvillyam Tindale* (Antwerp, Simon Cock, 1531), sig. I5r.

[36] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. Bb3r–4v.

[37] The contents of Barnes' *Supplication* and the important changes it underwent in its second edition of 1534 will be the subject of discussion in the following chapter. See James Lusardi, "The Career of Robert Barnes," in Louis Schuster, Richard Marius, James Lusardi, and Richard Schoeck, eds., *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More, Vol. 8, Pt. III* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 1367–1415; W.D.J. Cargill Thompson, "The Sixteenth-Century Editions of A Supplication Unto King Henry The Eighth by Robert Barnes, D.D.: A Footnote to the History of the Royal Supremacy," *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, Vol. 3 (1959–63): 133–142.

[38] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. Bb1r–v.

England's religious and secular authorities to unorthodoxy. However, this incongruity is masked by More's unwillingness to criticize Henry directly for his treatment of Barnes. In February 1526, Barnes had been forced to abjure a long list of heresies and to kneel submissively at Paul's Cross while Bishop Fisher preached against Luther. While under house arrest in London, he sold John Tyball a Tyndale New Testament.[39] In 1528, he managed to escape and fled to Wittenberg, where he matriculated at that city's university.[40] More's explanation in the *Confutation* preface that Barnes received a safe conduct because of Henry's "blessed disposycyon" is clearly inadequate. Some inkling of the far more complex reality comes out in John Foxe's later account of these events when he wrote, "Moore wold haue fain trapped him…at this time…but y^{e} king wold not let hym, for Crōwel was his great lord."[41]

Indeed, a closer look at some of the other evidence that exists regarding Barnes' visit to England in the fall of 1531 reveals that More was already clearly at cross-purposes with Henry VIII and certain elements at court when it came to the appropriate response to the English reformers. As More suggests, Barnes had in fact asked the king for a safe conduct in his *Supplication*.[42] On November 14, 1531, Cromwell's agent on the Continent, Stephen Vaughn, sent a copy of Barnes' book to London along with a letter praising its contents.[43] Despite More's condemnation of the former Cambridge Augustinian, there were several reasons that Henry was interested in speaking with Barnes at this time. Perhaps most important was the fact that Barnes carried a letter from Luther weighing in on the king's divorce.[44] Charles V's ambassador Eustace Chapuys reported in correspondence dated December 21, 1531, that Barnes had been spotted at court in the company of Nicolas de Burgo, an Italian Franciscan who was involved in

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[39] Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, Vol. I, Pt. II, 54–55.

[40] Preserved Smith, "Englishmen at Wittenberg in the Sixteenth Century," *English Historical Review*, Vol. 36, No. 143 (1921): 422–433.

[41] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1563), 603.

[42] Robert Barnes, *A supplication made by Robert Barnes doctoure in diuinite, vnto the most excellent and redoubted prince kinge henrye the eyght* (Antwerp, Simon Cock, 1531), sig. B5v.

[43] Lusardi, "The Career of Robert Barnes," 1390. Vaughn's activities on the Continent will be discussed more fully later in this chapter.

[44] In the letter, Luther refused to endorse Henry's desire to divorce Catherine but suggested that the king might follow "the example of the patriarchs" who practiced polygamy (Clebsch, *England Earliest Protestants*, 51).

the drafting of the *Determinations of the Universities*, published in an English translation by Thomas Berthelet at the beginning of the previous month.[45] Attempts to resolve the king's "great matter," with which More sought to remain uninvolved, had clearly brought together a wide spectrum of possible collaborators including both conservatives and reformers. In addition to the marriage question, Barnes' *Supplication* was also perceived as potentially useful propaganda because of its attacks on the clerical usurpation of authority, which he argued should have been vested in the monarch, and because of its clearly articulated teaching concerning the duty of obedience to the king.[46] Indeed, it appears that Henry and Cromwell may have intervened to prevent Bishop Stokesley of London from including Barnes' work in a list of heretical titles produced in December 1531.[47]

During Barnes' time at court, More found his hands tied. Nevertheless, he used his extensive network of informants to keep a close eye on the reformer. More reported in the second part of his *Confutation* that Barnes "shove hys berde and went lyke a merchaunt" to avoid drawing attention to himself, a report corroborated by Chapuys who likewise noted that Barnes assumed secular dress.[48] More also argued on several occasions that Barnes had violated the terms of his safe conduct, both by his behavior while in London and due to the fact he had exceeded the stay of "vi. weekes" granted him.[49] These comments provoked an angry response from John Frith, who declared that Barnes' had shown him the offer of safe conduct and that it "had but onlye thys one conditiō annexed vnto it that if he came before the feaste of christmas thē next insuynig he shuld haue fre lyberte to deperte at his

[45] At Thomas Cranmer's suggestion, Henry's regime had sought the opinions of various university faculties on the legitimacy of Henry's marriage. The *Determinations* reported the favorable conclusions that Henry's agents had been able to purchase or coerce. Lusardi, "The Career of Robert Barnes," 1392; Guy Bedouelle, "The Consultations of the Universities and Scholars Concerning the 'Great Matter' of King Henry VIII," in David Steinmetz, ed., *The Bible in the Sixteenth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 27.

[46] Barnes, *Supplication unto Henry VIII* (1531), sig. A4r. Barnes was largely conveying ideas earlier developed by his associate William Tyndale.

[47] Steven Haas, *Years Without a Policy?: Martin Luther's 'Christian Obedience' and the Theory of Royal Absolutism in the Propaganda of William Tyndale and Thomas Cromwell* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1974), 405–407.

[48] Thomas More, *The second parte of the cōfutacion of Tyndals answere* (London, William Rastell, 1533), sig. Qq2v; Lusardi, "The Career of Robert Barnes," 1392.

[49] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. Bb1r–v; *More, Second Part of the Confutation*, sig. Qq2v.

pleasure."[50] Whatever More may have personally believed about the fate that Barnes deserved, the reformer safely departed from England and returned to the Continent at the end of December 1531 or very early in 1532.

The tensions within the regime and between the king and his chancellor indicated by Barnes' visit to court late in 1531 are only hinted at in More's *Confutation* preface, which attempts to maintain the illusion of a unified and hostile governmental response to everything that the English reformers taught and represented. What the preface does not acknowledge at all is the fact that the government's offer of a safe conduct to Barnes was part of a wider effort over the course of 1531 to reach out to several reformers living in exile, most prominently More's greatest adversary William Tyndale. The current chapter will examine these efforts in greater detail. It will also consider More's ever more precarious position, which undermined his response to the reformers and their writings and led ultimately to his decision to resign the chancellorship in May 1532 only a few months after his *Confutation* was published.

II. *Safe Conducts for English Reformers*

Earlier in the previous section reference was made to More's appeal to "the good & gracyouse catholyke mynde…borne by the kynges hyghnes to the catholyk fayth" in his *Supplication of Souls*, published shortly before he became chancellor in October of 1529.[51] Despite this apparent optimism, More began his chancellorship already having encountered clear evidence that under certain circumstances Henry was willing to protect and even favor the English reformers. Indeed, the story of safe conducts actually begins several years before the events of 1531 with Simon Fish and his *Supplication of the Beggars*, a pithy assault on the Catholic Church's teachings about Purgatory, which More's *Supplication* sought to refute. As we shall see, More was at odds with Henry VIII from the very beginning, with regards to the divorce but also progressively with reference to the government's more general agenda as it was developed and shaped by the king and Thomas

[50] John Frith, *A boke made by Iohn Frith prisoner in the tower of London answeringe vnto M mores lettur* (Antwerp, 1533), sig. J1v–2r.

[51] More, *Supplication of Souls*, sig. E1r.

Cromwell. Geoffrey Elton has suggested that Henry appointed More in order that he might have a "tame humanist."[52] However, Richard Marius was surely correct when he concluded that "More began his office under the shadow of a tragic miscalculation by both the king and himself."[53]

1. *Simon Fish and the* Supplication of the Beggars

One of the earliest records of Simon Fish and his activities is preserved in the confession of Robert Necton from May 1528. Necton admitted to his interrogators:

> He bowght at sondry tymes of Mr. Fyshe dwellyng by the Whight Frears in London, many of the New Testaments in English; that is to say, now V. and now X. And sometyme mo, and sometyme less, to the nombre of XX. or XXX. in the gret volume. The which New Testaments the said Mr. Fyshe had of one Harmond, an English man, beyng beyond the see.[54]

Necton also reported that Fish had introduced him to George Constantine. Clearly, Fish was actively involved quite early in the network that developed to carry Tyndale's English New Testaments into the country. John Foxe provides additional information, reporting that Fish was a gentleman of Gray's Inn and that he first found it necessary to flee the realm after he provoked Wolsey's anger by playing the part of the cardinal in a highly critical Christmas play.[55] While abroad and in the company of Tyndale, Fish published from Antwerp what William Clebsch has aptly described as "probably [the] most widely

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[52] Quoted in Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography*, 200–201. Christopher Warner has gone further, arguing that More's appointment was part of a more general effort on Henry's part to create an image of himself as a philosopher king open to debate and council. More, however, refused to play the role that had had been scripted for him "by exploiting the official image of the king in ways designed to thwart the royal will" [Christopher Warner, *Henry VIII's Divorce: Literature and the Politics of the Printing Press* (Rochester: The Boydell Press, 1998), 49]. More's comments regarding the king in his *Supplication of Souls* are just one example of such a rhetorical and propagandistic agenda.

[53] Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography*, 365.

[54] Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, Vol. I, Pt. II, 63.

[55] "[T]here was a certeyne playe made by one maister Roo of the same inne gentilman, wherin partly ther was matter a genst the Cardinall Wolsey. And where none durst take vpon thē to playe that part which touched the saide Cardinall, this forsaid maister fisher toke vpon him to do it whereupon great displeasure followed vpō the Cardinalls part" [Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1563), 448].

read libellus of the early years of the English Reformation," his *A supplicacyon for the beggers*.[56]

Fish's contributions to the early English reformation and his credentials as a true reformer have, nevertheless, been called into question by some prominent scholars. For example, A.G. Dickens argued in his influential work, *The English Reformation*, that Fish's *Supplication* "can scarcely be claimed as a serious Protestant pamphlet; it exemplifies anticlericalism in its most virulent, unprincipled and eloquent form."[57] Even Clebsch concludes that "an attack on purgatory and a commendation of vernacular scripture, both cursory, fairly exhausted its theological content."[58] However, a more detailed examination will reveal that More was closer to the truth when he suggested that the *Supplication* was an extremely dangerous heretical work that propagated in a condensed form ideas first articulated by William Tyndale. Indeed, More saw in the *Supplication* a devious and purposeful change in the strategy of the reformers. He warned in his response to the work that when they found that a direct attack on the teachings of the Catholic Church was not effective, the English reformers had decided "to labour agaynst the church alone & get the clergye dystroyd wheruppon they parceyued well that the fayth and sacramentes wold not fayle to decay."[59]

More was right to be concerned, for Fish's *Supplication* was the most approachable and easily disseminated of all of the reformers' writings during this period. The copy preserved in the British Library is a small Octavo with fourteen pages of text and the work was short enough that John Foxe could later insert it in its entirety into the various additions of his *Acts and Monuments*.[60] Compared to the books of Tyndale and More, which were the primary focus of the previous two

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[56] Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants*, 241.

[57] A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation, 2nd Ed.* (University Park: Penn State Press, 1991), 120.

[58] Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants*, 244.

[59] More, *Supplication of Souls*, sig. E3v. It is also worth recalling More's response to Tyndale's charge that More had not criticized Erasmus for making observations similar to those put forward by the reformers, "I haue not contended wyth Erasmus my derlynge, bycause I found no suche malycyouse entent wyth Erasmus my derlynge, as I fynde wyth Tyndale" (More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. q4r. In other words, More looked beyond the mere anticlericalism in his opponents' writings and perceived what he believed to be their underlying heretical intentions.

[60] Simon Fish, *A supplicacyon for the beggers* (Antwerp, Johannes Graphaeus{?}, 1529{?}).

chapters, the *Supplication* was better suited for a popular audience. It was probably also cheaper to produce and distribute. Indeed, Foxe reports that the *Supplication* was "throwen and scattered at the procession in Westminster vpō Candelmas day," in February in 1529.[61] The work does not bear a colophon but external evidence suggests that it must have been produced quite late in 1528 or very early in 1529. In addition to Foxe's statement about its distribution in February 1529, there is also the fact that More's *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, printed in June but probably completed some months earlier, does not mentions Fish's work.[62] The *Supplication* also appears on a list of prohibited works reprinted by Foxe and attributed by the martyrologist to the year 1526 but which, given the titles it includes, could not have assumed its present form before the summer of 1529.[63]

Turning to the content of this short work, one finds many signs of Tyndale's influence. Richard Duerden has argued that Fish's work is a "digest of several pages from Tyndale's *Obedience*" and a careful comparison of the two texts demonstrates that Fish echoes almost all the central themes of Tyndale's earlier writings.[64] Fish rejects the claim that the clergy constituted a spiritual kingdom independent of and superior to the temporal kingdom.[65] He also argues that it is actually the clergy who are responsible for provoking disobedience in the king's subjects, not the reformers as their opponents claimed.[66] Both Tyndale

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[61] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1563), 445. For discussion of the date see Edward Arber, ed., *The English Scholar's Library of Old and Modern Works, Simon Fish of Gray's Inn, Gentleman. A Supplication of the Beggars* (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Co., 1895), ix.

[62] Haas, *Years Without a Policy?*, 210.

[63] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1563), 449–450; Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants*, 262–263.

[64] Richard Duerden, "The Temporal and Spiritual Kingdoms: Tyndale's Doctrine and Practice," *Reformation*, Vol. 1 (1996): 118–128. Duerden's list of similarities echoes the arguments of Steven Haas, "Simon Fish, William Tyndale, and Sir Thomas More's 'Lutheran Conspiracy'," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 23 (1972): 127–132, and of the chapter entitled "Christian Obedience 'Thrown and Scattered' in the Streets of London: Simon Fish's Popular Polemics" in Haas' dissertation from 1974.

[65] Tyndale declared, "ye are all sworne to gether and have separated youre selves from the lay people & have a severall kīdome amōg youre selves" (Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. B6v). Fish expressed a similar idea when he complained, "of one kyngdome [they have] made tweyne: the spirituall kyngdome (as they call it) for they wyll be named first, And your temporall kingdome" (Fish, *Supplication of the Beggars*, fol. 5v).

[66] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. C5r; Fish, *Supplication of the Beggars*, fol. 3r.

and Fish complain about the clergy's effective immunity from the laws of the land.[67] Fish's claim that the church now controls "the third part of all your Realme" recalls Tyndale's similar estimate of a "third fote of all the temporall londes."[68] Fish also follows Tyndale's basic approach of appealing to history to demonstrate the steady encroachment of the church into the secular sphere. A particularly noteworthy example of Fish's clear dependence on Tyndale is the former's praise of King John as a good king who was persecuted by the clergy of his day.[69]

The previous statements were all primarily examples of anticlericalism, albeit often in an extreme form. However, despite the evaluation of many modern scholars, Fish's *Supplication* also contained many elements that Thomas More—viewing the book as a popularization of Tyndale's writings and thus interpreting it in light of them—would clearly have regarded as heretical.[70] Most obvious was the rejection by both men of the doctrine of purgatory. Tyndale had complained in *Obedience*, "It is not ynough for them to raygne over all that are quycke but have created them a purgatory to raygne also over the deed," while a few pages later, he observed that the church used payments for masses for the dead as a means of extracting wealth from the laity.[71] Fish likewise noted the clergy's claim that "they pray for vs to God to delyuer our soules out of the paynes of purgatori" but then concluded that "there is no purgatory…it is a thing inuented by the couitousnesse of the spiritualtie."[72] More's *Supplication of Souls* was intended among other things as a reaffirmation of the doctrine based on the imagined testimony of those spirits residing there, as well as on arguments from scripture, the patristic writers, and reason.

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[67] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. D4v–5r; Fish, *Supplication of the Beggars*, fol. 3r, 5r.

[68] Fish, *Supplication of the Beggars*, fol. 1V; Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. R4v.

[69] Fish, *Supplication of the Beggars*, fol. 3v. Tyndale had developed this reimagining of King John in the concluding pages of his *Obedience* (sig. V5r–v). In the late 1530s, John Bale would write a play about King John that was also based on Tyndale's retelling of the story [see David Daniell, *The Bible in English: Its History and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 207–208].

[70] Dickens, *English Reformation, 2nd Ed*, 120; Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants*, 244; Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography*, 353–354.

[71] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. K3r–4r.

[72] Fish, *Supplication of the Beggars*, fol. 6r.

However, More also argued that Fish's heresy went much further, even if it was not always spelled out clearly in his text. More inquired:

> Yet one thīg wolde we very fayn wyt of hym. Whē he had robbed spoyled boūden beten and wedded all the clergy what wold he thē? Shuld eny of them be curatys of mennys soules and preche and mynyster the sacramentys to the people or nat?[73]

In other words, More believed that the implementation of Fish's various anticlerical policies, depriving the clergy of their possessions, forcing them to support themselves through manual labor, and compelling them to marry, constituted an implicit attack on the sacramental activities that had traditionally been their primary function. If More was correct, Fish would then need to be seen as a much more aggressive advocate of the full range of ideas developed by Tyndale in his *Obedience of a Christian Man* than has usually been the case. More also regarded Fish's advocacy of clerical marriage, alluded to in the last quote, as indisputably heretical.[74] Tyndale's and Frith's defense of Richard Hunne, whom More regarded as a heretic, was also heretical from the chancellor's perspective.[75]

Finally, any discussion of the heretical content of Fish's *Supplication*, at least from More's perspective, must include his defense of Tyndale's English Bible. As we have already seen, Fish had been an active agent in the network that carried the new printed vernacular Bibles into the realm.[76] In his polemical work he defended Tyndale's translation further when he declared, "they will not let the newe testament go a brode yn your moder tong lest men shulde espie that they by theyre cloked ypochrisi do translate thus fast your kingdome into theyre hōdes."[77] This statement seems to echo Tyndale's explanation for why the clergy would not allow an English Bible in his *Obedience*, "I can imagen no cause veryly excepte it be that we shulde not se the worke of Antychrist and iugulynge of ypocrites."[78] Given that More described

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[73] More, *Supplication of Souls*, sig. E1r.

[74] Throughout his writings, More demonstrated an obsession with the reformers' belief that clergy could break their vows of chastity and take wives. Less than a year before he published his *Supplication*, More had attacked both Tyndale and Luther for advocating this view in his *Dialogue* (More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. P3v).

[75] Fish, *Supplication of the Beggars*, fol. 5V, 7r; Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. J1r; More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, beginning sig. Q1v.

[76] Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, Vol. I, Pt. II, 63.

[77] Fish, *Supplication of the Beggars*, fol. 6v.

[78] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. B4r.

Tyndale's New Testament as "the foūtayn and well spryng of all theyr hole heresyes" in his *Supplication of Souls*, More would certainly not have dismissed this element of Fish's work, as a modern critic has done, as "cursory" advocacy of vernacular scriptures.[79]

Despite his strong statements concerning Henry's continuing orthodoxy, More clearly recognized that Fish's *Supplication of the Beggars* was a potentially dangerous appeal to the king by the English reformers. More argued that the author "couereth hys malycyouse entēt and purpose toward the fayth vnder y^{e} cloke of many temporall benefytes, that he sayth shuld succede and folow to the kynges hyghnes and hys realme, yf these hys hygh polytyque deuyces were ones hys grace agreed."[80] As such, More must have been extremely unhappy when he learned that Henry had read the book and that he had been favorably impressed with its contents. According to Foxe, the *Supplication* came to Henry's attention at the initiative of Anne Boleyn.[81] As Foxe tells the story:

> this boke was made, & so sent ouer to my Lady Anne Bulleyn, who then lay at a place not farre from the Courte. Whiche booke her brother seinge in her hande, tooke it and reade it, and gaue it her againe, willing her earnestly to giue it to the king, which thing she so did.[82]

Although there is no corroborating evidence to support the direct connection between the Boleyn faction and the exiled reformers implied by Foxe's statement, it does appear that the Boleyns sought to bring to the king's attention works that were critical of the pope and the church hierarchy.[83] It was around this same time that Anne is also said to have given Henry VIII a copy of Tyndale's *Obedience of a Christian Man*.[84]

Foxe then continues his account of Fish by reporting that after reading the *Supplication*, Henry inquired who the author of the work

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[79] More, *Supplication of Souls*, sig. E3v; Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants*, 244.

[80] More, *Supplication of Souls*, sig. E1r.

[81] For further discussion, see Thomas Freeman, "Research, Rumour and Propaganda: Anne Boleyn in Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs'," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (1995): 797–819.

[82] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1563), 448.

[83] This first point is evident from the fact that Tyndale does not mention Anne in his discussion of the divorce in *Practice of Prelates*, nor does he side with those who supported Henry's efforts to marry her.

[84] Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, Vol. I, Pt. I, 172. Steven Haas, appealing to Cardinal Campeggio's report on April 3, 1529, that Lutheran books were circulating at court, argues that the events Foxe describes probably occurred between March and October of 1529 (Haas, *Years Without a Policy?*, 278).

might be and then summoned Fish's wife to appear at court. She was able to procure a safe conduct for her husband. Fortuitously, Fish had recently returned from the Continent (presumably to help in the distribution of his book and other literature by the reformers) and was in hiding nearby. Fish received a royal audience and, if Foxe is correct, even went hunting with Henry. Before departing from the king's presence, Fish expressed his fear of Chancellor More, a detail that would suggest that this part of the story must have occurred after More's elevation in October 1529.[85] In response, Henry gave him his signet ring as a token of royal favor.[86]

Foxe concludes his account of Fish's life by noting that Fish died of plague six months after his interview with Henry, probably in the summer of 1530.[87] Nevertheless, the preceding discussion reveals that as early as 1529 Henry had demonstrated an interest in the writings of the reformers when he believed they might serve his purposes. In such cases, the king was perfectly willing to prevent the church and its allies from acting against certain individuals. In his *Supplication of Souls*, More denounced the author of the *Supplication of the Beggars* as "that dyspytuouse & dyspytefull person" and accused him of spreading heresy.[88] However, even after his elevation as chancellor, More found that he could not act openly against a man that Henry had decided to favor. Over the next few years, as hope of resolving the king's great matter by traditional means faded and as Thomas Cromwell gained Henry's ear, such royal flirtation with the English reformers would continue.

2. *Stephen Vaughn's Mission to the Reformers in 1531*

As has just been demonstrated, Fish's *Supplication of the Beggars* drew many of its central ideas from Tyndale's *Obedience of a Christian Man*, printed in October of 1528. Although Henry VIII took a firm stand against Tyndale's New Testament throughout the late 1520s, certain

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[85] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1563), 448. Foxe's reference to Bishop Stokesley in this passage is clearly an error because Stokesley did not become bishop of London until November of 1530, following Tunstal's transfer to the see of Durham and after Fish's death by plague (Arber, *A Supplication of the Beggars*, xiv).

[86] There is no corroboration for these events besides Foxe's account, but More's inability to move against Fish at the time suggests that Foxe's narrative is probably generally accurate in its broad outlines.

[87] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1563), 449.

[88] More, *Supplication of Souls*, sig. A1v.

elements of Tyndale's later work appear to have been more appealing.[89] However, the good will of the king was undermined again by the publication in 1530 of Tyndale's *Practice of Prelates*, which was available in England by the fall. Earlier chapters of the current study have focused on Tyndale's aggressive attack on the clergy in *Prelates*, but the work also included his views on Henry's proposed divorce, which Tyndale concluded could not be justified on the basis of biblical law. In November, John Tyndale (the translator's brother) and several other London merchants were arrested for distributing *Prelates* and were forced to participate in a public book-burning ceremony.[90] The *Glass of Truth*, one of the earliest pieces of public propaganda advocating the divorce and a text perhaps coauthored by Henry himself, would later seek to refute Tyndale's interpretations of the relevant scriptural passages.[91]

However, despite this setback, Cromwell must have persuaded Henry that Tyndale's writings on obedience and his attacks on papal authority were too useful to burn all bridges with the exiled reformer. A royal proclamation, probably issued in November 1529 and printed by the king's printer, includes among its list of heretical works Tyndale's *Practice of Prelates* but his *Obedience of a Christian Man* is conspicuously absent.[92] In the words of one of Tyndale's nineteenth-century biographers, "Cromwell now became anxious to induce Tindale to return to England, in order, perhaps, that his powerful pen might be enlisted in defense of the great cause which the new minister was so anxious to promote."[93] To this end, Cromwell commissioned his agent Stephen Vaughn, who was about to travel to the Continent, to

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[89] Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, Vol. I, Pt. I, 172.

[90] Ambassador Chapuys reported this event to Charles V in a letter dated November 27, 1530 (Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography*, 209). Foxe's record of John Tyndale's punishment "for sendyng v. markes to hys brother William Tyndale beyond the sea, and for receauyng and kepyng with hym certein letters from hys brother," an event he dates to 1530, is probably a reference to the same proceedings [John Foxe, *The first volume of the ecclesiasticall history contayynge the actes and monuments* (London, John Day, 1570), 1185].

[91] Henry VIII, *The glasse of the truthe* (London, Thomas Berthelet, 1532{?}, sig. B4r–v.

[92] For discussion of the difficulty of dating this proclamation, which was probably an updated version of an earlier royal proclamation from the previous year, see Hughes, *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, 181–186, and Haas, *Years Without a Policy?*, 373–375.

[93] Robert Demaus, *William Tindale* (London: The Religious Track Society of St. Paul's Churchyard, 1871), 336.

attempt to make contact with Tyndale.[94] Vaughn left England at the end of November. His mission was presumably a closely kept secret. Nevertheless, in a letter dated December 17, 1530, Chapuys reported a rumor that Henry was considering offering Tyndale a seat on his council in order to buy his silence or support.[95] One year earlier, Henry had offered Simon Fish a safe conduct, but Tyndale, if he could be won over, would be a far more useful and influential ally.

The diplomatic mission of 1531 resulted in a series of letters between Cromwell, Henry VIII, and Vaughn, which provide fascinating information on the relationship between the English reformers in exile and developments taking place at court as the king began to contemplate alternative means of resolving his great matter. On January 26, 1531, Vaughn wrote to Henry from Bergen-op-Zoom reporting his initial efforts to contact Tyndale.

> Most excellent Prince, and my most redoubted Sovereign, mine humble observation due unto your Majesty. My mind continually labouring and thirsting, most dread and redoubted Sovereign, with exceeding desire to attain the knowledge of such things as your Majesty commanded me to learn and practice in these parts, and thereof to advertise you from time to time…I have written three sundry letters unto William Tyndale, and the same sent, for the more surety, to three sundry places, to Frankfort, Hamburg, and Marburg—I then, not [being] assured in which of the same he was, and had very good hope, after I heard say in England, that he would, upon the promise of your Majesty, and of your most gracious safe conduct, be content to repair and come into England, that I should, partly therewith, and partly with such other persuasions as I then devised in my said letters, and finally with a promise which I made him that whatsoever surety he would reasonably desire, for his safe coming in and going out of your realm, my friends should labour to have the same granted by your majesty.[96]

Several elements of this letter deserve additional comment.

First, Vaughn reports that he had heard even before he left England that Tyndale might be interested in a safe conduct. That Tyndale had considered the possibility is evident from a passage in his *Pentateuch*, published in January 1530. In his introduction to the book of Numbers,

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[94] Vaughn's close association with Cromwell is evidenced by the fact that the former was named as a beneficiary in a draft will produced by Cromwell in July 1529 [Robert Hutchinson, *Thomas Cromwell: The Rise and Fall of Henry VIII's most Notorious Minister* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2007), 25].

[95] Schuster, "Thomas More's Polemical Career," 1221.

[96] Demaus, *William Tindale*, 337.

Tyndale explains the relationship between God's gracious promise of heaven and the individual's works in this life with the following example:

> As if the kinges grace shuld promesse me to defend me at whome in myne awne reyalme yet the way thyther is thorow the see wherī I might happlye soffre no litle trouble…I wolde thīke & wolde other saye that my paynes were well rewarded: whych reward & benefyte I wolde not proudlye ascribe vnto the merites of my paynes takynge by the waye: but vnto the goodnesse mercyfulnesse and constaunt truth of the kinges grace whose gifte it is.[97]

Although there is no existing evidence to demonstrate the fact, it is also possible that news had spread through the network of the Brethren, some of whom were prominent men in London, that Tyndale might be open to a royal summons.

Second, it is evident that finding Tyndale might be quite difficult. Various efforts on behalf of church authorities to find and apprehend Tyndale since 1526 had come to nothing. John Hackett had spent several frustrating months in Antwerp in early 1527.[98] In October 1528, Herman Rinck, who had been involved in the initial disruption of Tyndale's attempt to print the New Testament in Cologne, wrote to Wolsey to report on efforts to apprehend Tyndale and several of his associates in Frankfurt, but by that time Tyndale had probably moved on to Marburg.[99] Foxe would later recount that Tyndale resided in Hamburg while finishing his translation of the *Pentateuch* in 1529.[100] It must have been clues such as these which led Vaughn to send off letters to a variety of towns in hopes of reaching Tyndale and arranging some sort of meeting.[101] Vaughn reported later in his letter to Henry that his efforts had paid off and that he had received a message from

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[97] Tyndale, *The Pentateuch*, Numbers prologue, sig. A6r. To my knowledge, William Clebsch was the first to make this association (Clebsch, *England Early Protestants*, 177).

[98] The desire of Antwerp's urban elites to preserve their jurisdictional autonomy and the fact that Tyndale's English-language writings posed little threat in the Netherlands both contributed to Hackett's inability to get imperial authorities in Brussels to move against Tyndale.

[99] Edward Arber, ed., *The First Printed English Bible. Translated by William Tyndale. Photo-Lithographed from the Unique Fragment, now in the Grenville Collection, British Museum* (London: 5 Queen Square, Bloomsbury, 1871), 32.

[100] Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography*, 198.

[101] While he waited, Vaughn occupied himself in searching for a copy of Tyndale's forthcoming *Answer to More's Dialogue* (Demaus, *William Tindale*, 338).

Tyndale which he would forward to the king (unfortunately, it has not survived).[102]

Along with his letter to the king, Vaughn sent a separate note to Cromwell. He informed his patron, "It is unlikely to get Tyndale into England, when he daily heareth so many things from thence which feareth him."[103] By this time, Tyndale had presumably learned about the negative treatment of his brother the previous November. In addition, Chancellor More's campaign against the reformers was gaining steam and Tyndale must have followed the plight of his co-religionists as closely as he could. His reaction to the execution of Thomas Hitton in February 1530 has already been noted.[104] Nevertheless, Vaughn was resolved to continue his efforts to gain Tyndale's trust. It appears that Vaughn was personally sympathetic to the cause of reform and to Tyndale for he concluded his message to Cromwell with the following statement, "The man is of a greater knowledge than the King's Highness doth take him for, which well appearth by his works. Would God he were in England!"[105]

The general tone of Vaughn's private note to Cromwell suggests his awareness that Henry was not entirely sold on the idea of having Tyndale as an ally. This interpretation is supported by Vaughn's next surviving letter to Cromwell from March 25, explaining that he had obtained a manuscript copy of a portion of Tyndale's *Answer* and that he would send it along as soon as he had made a fair copy. He reported that he had heard that the work would include an epistle to the king but, Vaughn declared, "I am in doubt whether the King's Highness will be pleased to receive any such epistle from him or not."[106] In his discussion of the Vaughn/Cromwell correspondence, David Daniell concluded that since the published version of the *Answer* included no such address to the king, that Vaughn was simply misinformed.[107] However, it seems just as reasonable to assume that Tyndale had been considering such a public appeal to Henry but that his interaction with Vaughn made such an epistle unnecessary. Vaughn also reported that

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[102] Demaus, *William Tindale*, 338.
[103] Ibid., 340.
[104] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. R65; Tyndale, *Answer to Thomas More's Dialogue*, sig. I5r.
[105] Demaus, *William Tindale*, 340.
[106] Ibid., 343.
[107] Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography*, 212.

Tyndale would not publish the *Answer* until he had learned Henry's reaction to it.[108]

In the third week of April, Vaughn had even more interesting news to report. He had finally met Tyndale. His account is worth quoting at some length:

> The day before the date hereof I spake with Tyndale without the town of Antwerp, and by this means: He sent a certain person to seek me, whom he had advised to say that a certain friend of mine, unknown to the messenger, was very desirous to speak with me; praying me to take pains to go unto him, to such place as he should bring me. Then I to the messenger, 'What is your friend, and where is he?' 'His name I know not,' said he, 'but if it be your pleasure to go where he is, I will be glad thither to bring you.' Thus, doubtful what this matter meant, I concluded to go with him, and followed him till he brought me without the gates of Antwerp, into a field lying nigh unto the same; where was abiding me this said Tyndale. At our meeting, 'Do you not know me?' said this Tyndale. 'I do not well remember you,' said I to him. 'My name,' said he, 'is Tyndale.' 'But Tyndale!' said I, 'Fortunate be our meeting.' Then Tyndale, 'Sir, I have been exceedingly desirous to speak with you.' 'And I with you; what is your mind?'[109]

Tyndale then, according to Vaughn, proceeded with the following remarks:

> 'Sir,' said he, 'I am informed that the King's Grace taketh great displeasure with me for putting forth of certain books, which I lately made in these parts; but specially for the book named *The Practice of Prelates*; whereof I have no little marvel, considering that in it I did but warn his Grace of the subtle demeanour of the clergy of his realm towards his person, and of the shameful abusions by them practised, not a little threatening the displeasure of his Grace and weal of his realm: in which doing I showed and declared the heart of a true subject, which sought the safeguard of his royal person and weal of his commons, to the intent that his Grace, whereof warned, might in due time prepare his remedies against their subtle dreams…I hoped with my labours to do honour to God, true service to my prince, and pleasure to his commons; how is that his Grace, this considering, may either by himself think, or by the persuasions of others be brought to think, that in this doing I should not show a pure mind, a true and incorrupt zeal and affection to his Grace? Was there in me any such mind, when I warned his Grace to beware of

[108] Demaus, *William Tindale*, 343.
[109] Ibid., 344–345.

> his cardinal, whose iniquity he shortly after approved according to my writing? Doth this deserve hatred?[110]

In his *Practice of Prelates*, Tyndale had indeed warned the king to beware of Wolsey, who he called the "shipwracke of all Englond."[111] Due to his unrivaled position in Henry's government for more than fifteen years before his fall from power in late 1529, Wolsey had frequently been the object of criticism by reformers and others.[112] However, Tyndale went further. Having devoted the earlier sections of *Prelates* to a discussion of the history of corruption within the church and having given the bishops a prominent role in that drama, Tyndale suggested that Wolsey was behind many of the problems facing his homeland.[113] For example, Tyndale devoted fourteen pages to describing English foreign policy during the first half of Henry VIII's reign in order to demonstrate that Wolsey had been manipulating events to serve his own purposes.[114] Tyndale even attributed Henry's desire for a divorce to Wolsey's influence.[115]

By the time Tyndale finished writing *Practice of Prelates*, Wolsey had already fallen from power.[116] However, Tyndale saw subtle machinations

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[110] Demaus, *William Tindale*, 345–346.

[111] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. G4v. For further discussion of Wolsey and his career as Henry VIII's chief minister, refer to Charles Ferguson, *Naked To Mine Enemies: The Life of Cardinal Wolsey* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1958).

[112] See, for example, William Roye's and Jerome Barlow's *Rede me and be nott wrothe for I saye no thyne but trothe* (Strasbourg, Johann Schoot, 1528), which included a harsh satirical attack on the Cardinal.

[113] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. B6r–7r.

[114] Ibid., sig. G6r–H4v. J.J. Scarisbrick, at least, has argued that it was Henry who wanted a militarist foreign policy and that Wolsey's goal was to achieve peace among Europe's competing powers, England, France, Spain, the Hapsburgs, the Pope, and Venice. Scarisbrick also calls into question Wolsey's ambitions to become pope, something that Tyndale assumed [J.J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 48, 107–109; Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. H6r].

[115] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. H4v–7r. Specifically, Tyndale suggested that Wolsey "enspired the kinge that the quene was not his wife by the bisshope of Lincolne his cõfessoure" (Ibid., sig. H5r). Having rejected confession as a biblical sacrament, Tyndale had argued already in his *Obedience* that it was simply a means whereby the clergy could learn the secrets of the laity and influence their decisions (Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. N1v–2r). Interestingly, More may also have attributed Henry's desire for a divorce to Wolsey's influence. His step-son William Roper certainly did and repeated the accusation in his biography of More several decades later [William Roper, *The mirrour of virtue in worldly greatnes. Or The life of Syr Thomas More Knight* (Paris, 1626 <1557>), 48–49].

[116] This fact would seem to call into question the chronology of events that Tyndale describes in his letter to Vaughn.

even in this turn of events. He argued that Wolsey had voluntarily stepped aside and that he had arranged for More's elevation to the chancellorship. Tyndale called More "y^{e} chefest of all his secretaryes, one nothīge inferior vnto his master in lyenge fayninge and bearinge two faces in one hode."[117] He also suggested that Cuthbert Tunstal's transfer to the bishopric of Durham was a reward for his faithful service, particularly his burning of the New Testament.[118] In his *Confutation* preface several years later, More would mock Tyndale's "hygh worldely wytte" and his supposed knowledge of secret backroom deals at court.[119] By that point, Wolsey was dead and it was apparent that Tyndale had been mistaken in his interpretation of the minister's fall. Even in 1530, Henry could not have been well pleased by Tyndale's assertion that "the Cardinall and oure holye bisshoppes haue led him sens he was firste kynge," in other words, that the king had been easily duped.[120]

To return to Stephen Vaughn's letter of April 1531, Vaughn reported that after defending the *Practice of Prelates* Tyndale moved on to another topic even closer to his heart, vernacular scripture:

> Again, may his Grace, being a Christian prince, be so unkind to God, which hath comanded His Word to be spread throughout the world, to give more faith to wicked persuasions of men, which, presuming above Gods wisdom, and contrary to that which Christ expressly commandeth in His testament, dare say that it is not lawful for the people to have the same in a tongue that they understand; because the purity thereof should open men's eyes to see their wickedness? Is there more danger in the King's subjects than in the subjects of all other princes, which in every of their tongues have the same, under privilege of their sufferance? As I now am, very death were more pleasant to me than life, considering man's nature to be such as can bear no truth.[121]

As we shall see, the issue of an authorized English Bible was of utmost concern for Tyndale. By the spring of 1531, it is possible that Tyndale

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[117] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. K2r–v.

[118] Ibid., sig. K3v–4r. In reality, Tunstal was sympathetic to Queen Catherine's cause and the move to Durham was probably an effort to distance him from the center of events, just as he had been sent with More to observe the Peace of Cambrai during the divorce trial in the summer of 1529 [Charles Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstal: Churchman, Scholar, Statesman, Administrator* (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1938), 174–176].

[119] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. Bb1r.

[120] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. K6r.

[121] Demaus, *William Tindale*, 346.

entertained some hope that the king might allow just such a Bible to be distributed to his subjects. In a royal proclamation dated June 22, 1530, Henry had condemned Tyndale's translation but had concluded his remarks with the following words:

> Albeit if it shall hereafter appear to the King's highness that his said people do utterly abandon and forsake all perverse, erroneous, and seditious opinions…his highness intendeth to provide that the Holy Scripture shall by great, learned, and Catholic persons [be] translated into the English tongue, if it shall then seem to his grace convenient so to be.[122]

Others sympathetic to reform also appear to have believed that times were auspicious. In December, Hugh Latimer had begun to circulate in London an open letter to the king asking for an approved English Bible.[123] In reality, it would be the late 1530s, after the break with Rome and the implementation of the royal supremacy, before anything would come of Henry's promise.[124]

Vaughn concluded his letter by describing the end of his first interview with Tyndale and then by offering his opinion on the reformer's character:

> Thus, after a long conversation had between us, for my part making answer as my wit would serve me, which were too long to write, I assayed him with gentle persuasions, to know whether he would come into England; ascertaining him that means should be made, if he thereto were minded, without his peril or danger, that he might so do; and that what surety he would devise for the same purpose, should, by labour of friends, be obtained of your Majesty. But to this he answered, that he neither would nor durst come into England, albeit your Grace would promise him never so much surety; fearing lest, as he hath before written, your promise made should shortly be broken, by the persuasion of the clergy, which would affirm that promises made with heretics ought not to be kept…[125]
>
> …After these words he then, being something fearful of me, lest I would have pursued him, and drawing also towards night, he took his leave of me, and departed from the town, and I toward the town, saying, 'I should shortly, peradventure, see him again, or if not, hear

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[122] Hughes, *Royal Tudor Proclamations*, 196.

[123] Allan Chester, *Hugh Latimer: Apostle to the English* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1954), 61–65.

[124] This development will be the subject of the current study's concluding chapter.

[125] We have already seen in the introduction to this chapter that More would later argue that Robert Barnes' safe-conduct should not be honored (More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. Bb1r–v; More, *Second Part of the Confutation*, sig. Qq2v).

> from him.' Howbeit I suppose he afterward returned to the town by another way; for there is no likelihood that he should lodge without the town. Hasty to pursue him I was not, because I had some likelihood to speak shortly with him; and in pursuing him I might perchance have failed of my purpose, and put myself in danger.
>
> To declare to your majesty what, in my poor judgement, I think of the man, I ascertain your Grace I have not communed with a man—[126]

The letter ends abruptly at this point.

The conclusion (or lack of a conclusion) to this letter has provoked an extensive historiographical debate. Robert Demaus, Tyndale's first modern biographer, argued that the incomplete transcription of Vaughn's letter preserved in the Cotton Manuscripts reveals Henry's angry response to the letter. In Demaus' opinion, "the suspicion irresistibly arises that the indignant monarch to whom it was addressed, unable to control his patience any longer, had vented his anger upon the honest document."[127] Most subsequent biographers have followed his lead and concluded that the king in his rage tore the letter thus preventing the preservation of its final remarks.[128] Geoffrey Elton went further, concluding that this episode suggests that Vaughn was acting well beyond his commission and that it was on his own initiative that he suggested to Tyndale the possibility of a safe conduct. However, Steven Haas has demonstrated that consideration of the entire series of correspondence proves that Henry was at least tacitly involved in the decision to approach Tyndale.[129]

In a slightly different reading of events, Richard Marius argued that Henry's apparent anger was a product of his exposure to Tyndale's *Practice of Prelates*.[130] This is not an unreasonable interpretation given the contents of Tyndale's work discussed above, particularly the reformer's position on the question of the king's divorce. However, Henry's distaste for *Prelates* is not enough to explain his reaction to a letter in April of 1531. The chronology simply does not work. Even Marius makes it clear that Henry must have been well aware of the

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[126] Demaus, *William Tindale*, 346–348.

[127] Ibid., 346–348.

[128] J.F. Mozley, *William Tyndale* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1937), 195; C.H. Williams, *William Tyndale* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1969), 40. David Daniell does not believe that such an interpretation is necessary (Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography*, 215).

[129] For discussion of Elton's analysis in his *Reform and Renewal* (1973) and Haas' response, see Haas, *Years Without a Policy?*, 377–384.

[130] Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography*, 389.

contents of Tyndale's book months before Vaughn's encounter with Tyndale outside the walls of Antwerp.[131] It seems best to assume that Cromwell had persuaded Henry that some sort of arrangement with Tyndale was desirable despite *Prelates*, although Henry was never entirely sold on the matter. Ambassador Chapuys' letters of November and December 1530 support this conclusion, as does a close reading of Cromwell's response to Vaughn's letter.[132]

A draft of Cromwell's letter is preserved in the Cotton Manuscripts and it has been so heavily edited by an amending hand (possibly Henry's) that it is difficult to determine precisely what the final form sent to Vaughn may have looked like. I have followed Demaus' reconstruction in the following quotations. Cromwell begins by informing his agent that he has forwarded Vaughn's letters and his manuscript copy of a section of Tyndale's *Answer to More's Dialogue* to the king. Then he continues:

> And albeit that I might well perceive that his Majesty was right well pleased, and right acceptably considered your diligence and pains taken in the writing and sending of the said book, so also in the persuading and exhorting of Tyndale to repair into this realm: yet his Highness nothing liked the said book, being filled with seditious, slanderous lies, and fantastical opinions, showing therein neither learning nor truth: and further communing with his Grace I might well conceive that he thought that ye bare much affection towards the said Tyndale.[133]

From these comments it seems that it was Tyndale's latest book, still unpublished, which had provoked the king's anger. The royal response to the *Answer* should not be too surprising. Despite Vaughn's judgment in an earlier letter that "[n]o work that ever he made is written in so gentle a style," Tyndale did not hesitate to defend a range of doctrinal positions for which the king had little sympathy.[134] It was the same book that would provoke More's vast two-part *Confutation* in 1532 and 1533. It seems unlikely that Henry had personally read much of the *Answer*, just as he had clearly not read more than a few selections of Tyndale's *Obedience of a Christian Man* two years earlier.

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[131] Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography*, 389–390.
[132] Schuster, "Thomas More's Polemical Career," 1220–1221.
[133] Demaus, *William Tindale*, 350–351.
[134] Ibid., 343.

In both cases, the king was probably guided to particular passages by those around him.[135]

It is evident that Cromwell's influence over the king was not as strong as it would subsequently become and that conservatives, presumably Thomas More among them, still had the king's ear. Cromwell's letter to Vaughn continues:

> The King's Highness, therefore, hath commanded me to advertise you that ye should desist and leave any further to persuade or attempt the said Tyndale to come into this realm; alleging that he, perceiving the malicious, perverse, uncharitable, and indurate mind of the said Tyndale is in manner without hope of reconciliation in him, and is very joyous to have his realm destitute of such a person.[136]

These instructions would seem to slam the door to any further negotiation with the exiled reformers. However, this was not actually the case. First, Cromwell explained that Henry was still interested in achieving reconciliation with Tyndale's young associate John Frith to whom Vaughn was encouraged to make overtures of friendship. Cromwell concludes, "I exhort you…[to] withdraw your affection from the said Tyndale and all his sort, but also as much as you can…to allure all the said Fryth and other such persons being…assistants to the same, from all their erroneous minds and opinions."[137] Even with the clause condemning 'erroneous opinions,' this is clearly a conflicted policy.

Second, Vaughn's next letter on May 20 and his subsequent activities reveal that efforts to win Tyndale over as an ally were not at an end. Apparently Cromwell's previous letter contained a postscript that largely negated the thrust of the main body of the message. Vaughn reported:

> I have again been in hand to persuade Tyndale; and to draw him the rather to favour my persuasion, and not to think the same feigned, I showed him a clause contained in Master Cromwell's letter, containing these words following—'And notwithstanding other the premises in this my letter contained, if it were possible, by good and wholesome

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[135] This conclusion is supported by Vaughn's comment in a later letter about a book he had found by Melanchthon. He told Cromwell, "I would gladly send such things to his Highness; but I am informed that he looketh not upon himself but committeth them to others. I am sorry he so doeth, because I know his high judgment in learning to be such as might safely without danger approve men's opinions by reading thereof" (Demaus, *William Tindale*, 359).

[136] Demaus, *William Tindale*, 352.

[137] Ibid., 354.

> exhortations, to reconcile and convert the said Tyndale from the train and affection which he now is in, and to excerpt and take away the opinions and fantasies sorely rooted in him, I doubt not but the King's Highness is so inclined to mercy, pity, and compassion, that he refuseth none which he seeth to submit themselves to the obedience and good order of the world.'[138]

That Cromwell would include such a postscript is significant for it suggests that Cromwell believed that Henry's passionate response to Tyndale's *Answer* was merely a temporary complication in the campaign to recruit the reformer. In 1531, Cromwell had not yet secured his later status as Henry's most important and influential councilor and it seems highly improbable that he would have risked active support for a rogue policy that the king had entirely rejected. The fact that Vaughn continued to report his activities to both Cromwell and Henry throughout the remainder of the year further supports this interpretation.

Vaughn reported that Cromwell's postscript had a pronounced impact on Tyndale. Vaughn recalled, "after sight thereof I perceived the man to be exceedingly altered, and to take the same very near unto his heart, in such wise that water stood in his eyes, and answered, 'What gracious words are these.' "[139] What follows are essentially Tyndale's terms of submission, at least as Vaughn reported them:

> if it would stand with the King's most gracious pleasure to grant only a bare text of the Scripture to be put forth among his people, like as is put forth among the subjects of the Emperor in these parts, and of other Christian princes, be it of the translation of what person soever shall please his Majesty, I shall immediately make faithful promise never to write more, nor abide two days in these parts after the same; but immediately to repair into his realm, and there most humbly submit myself at the feet of his Royal Majesty, offering my body to suffer what pain or torture, yea, what death his Grace will, so that this be obtained.[140]

The first thing to note is that Tyndale does not seem to be thinking in terms of a safe conduct. His belief, expressed in April at his first meeting with Vaughn, that such a guarantee of safety would probably

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[138] Demaus, *William Tindale*, 357.

[139] Ibid., 357.

[140] Ibid., 358. Despite the fact that we are reliant entirely on Vaughn's account for Tyndale's words on this particular occasion, the translator's willingness to subordinate all else to the production and free distribution of an English Bible is in keeping with his priorities as expressed in his biblical prefaces and his other writings.

not be honored once he arrived in England had not changed. Instead, he is offering his future silence and even his life in exchange for an authorized English Bible. Throughout his time in exile, Tyndale had few illusions about his likely fate. In 1528, in his *Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, he had written, "Some man wil aske parauenture why I take the laboure to make this worke in as moch as they will brūne it seinge they brūt the Gospel. I asware in brunninge the new testamente they did none other thing thē I loked for no more shall they doo if the brunne me also."[141] This would indeed be his fate in the fall of 1536.

Tyndale's terms of submission are also interesting because of what they tell us about his priorities and about his views on the efficacy of scripture in the vernacular. Tyndale makes it clear that he would forgo any further polemical writing if the king would allow his people an English Bible. This is news that would have been very welcome to Henry given his reaction to many elements of Tyndale's *Practice of Prelates* and *Answer to Thomas More's Dialogue*. Tyndale's willingness to make such a promise reflected his evident belief that a vernacular Bible widely circulated would have far more impact than all the other writings of the reformers. The previous year in his prologue to the *Pentateuch* he had explained his initial motivation to become a translator in the following words, "I had perceaved by experyence how that it was impossible to stablysh the laye people in any truth excepte y^{e} scripture were playnly layde before their eyes in their mother tonge."[142] This was still his motivation and his ambition. He would even be satisfied, he said, if the king authorized some other translation.[143]

Tyndale's request that the king "grant only a bare text of the Scripture" is also significant. The issue of marginal notes and glosses was highly contentious during the early decades of the Reformation. When copies of the new printed English Bible first began to circulate

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[141] William Tyndale, *That fayth the mother of all good workes iustifieth us {Wicked Mammon}* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1528), sig. A5r.

[142] Tyndale, *Pentateuch*, sig. A2v.

[143] Had an alternative English Bible been produced, it would probably have been much more Latinate than the Bible that Tyndale has left us. Many conservatives were extremely attached to the traditional medieval Vulgate and in 1542 Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, would suggest a long list of Latin words that he wished to see reintroduced into a proposed revision of the Great Bible (Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, 274). When a Catholic English Bible was finally produced (New Testament: Rheims, 1582/Old Testament: Douai, 1610), it was a hybrid text, largely a translation from the Latin Vulgate but also showing the influence of Tyndale's earlier work (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 358–364).

in late 1526, one of the major sources of concern for church authorities was the marginal annotations and other commentary that accompanied them. Tunstal's chaplain, Robert Ridley, argued in a letter from February 1527 that Tyndale and his assistant William Roye were "manifest lutheranes heretikes & apostates, as doth opynly apeir…by their comentares & annotations in Mathew & Marcum, in the first print, also by their preface in the 2d prent."[144] Even after Henry had warmed to the idea of an authorized English Bible a decade later, he was still concerned about the danger posed by heretical glosses. A royal proclamation from November 1538 prohibited the importation of "any books of divine Scripture in the English tongue with any annotations in the margin."[145] In 1543, after the conservative reaction following the fall of Cromwell, Parliament passed the Act for the Advancement of True Religion, which, among other things, required, "if there should be found in any such Bibles or New Testaments, any annotations or preambles, that then the owners of them should cut or blot the same in such wise as they cannot be perceived or read."[146] Surviving copies suggest that this command was usually obeyed.

The reformers could also be highly critical of marginal glosses, though of course they objected to notes that suggested traditional Catholic interpretations. Tyndale argued throughout his writings that centuries of faulty scholastic exposition had obscured the simple literal meaning of scripture.[147] In his 1533 exposition of the Sermon on the Mount, he would argue that these three chapters in the book of

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[144] Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, 122. The incomplete edition printed at Cologne in 1525 had marginal notations and a prologue, while the first complete New Testament from Worms had no annotations and included only a brief address to the reader at the end of the text. Ridley seems to have conflated the two editions, which he acknowledges were not in front of him as he wrote the letter. The Cologne fragment as it has come down to us only includes a translation through Matthew 22 (signature H) but early evidence suggests that it may have originally contained several additional quires, which would have carried the text into the book of Mark (Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography*, 109–110).

[145] Hughes, *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, 272. Matthew's Bible of 1537 contained copious notes, many drawn from vernacular translations in other European languages such as Lefevre's French Bible of 1534 [Brook Westcott, *A General View of the History of the English Bible* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1916), 71].

[146] Quoted in John Eadie, *The English Bible: An External and Critical History of the Various English Translations of Scripture* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1876), 408–409.

[147] William Tyndale, *A compendious introduccion prologe or preface vn to the pistle off Paul to the Romayns* (Worms, Peter Schoeffer, 1526), sig. A2r; Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. A1v.

Matthew, "wedeth out the thornes and busshes of their [i.e. the religious leaders of Jesus' day] pharesaicall gloses, wherwith they had stopped vp the narow waye and strayte gate, that few coude finde them."[148] A few pages later he continued, "by suche gloses…haue we Christens lost Christe agayne, and the vnderstandynge of the moste clere texte."[149] However, the reformers believed if such accoutrements were stripped away, the plain text of scripture could speak for itself. As George Joye argued in his 1531 translation of Isaiah, the reader did not need "eny grete glose" because the Holy Spirit who inspired the prophet was the same Spirit who would lead him or her to a right understanding of the text.[150] This view of the self-sufficiency of the English Bible provides the context for interpreting Tyndale's statement to Vaughn in May of 1531.[151]

In the spring of 1531, neither Tyndale nor the king was willing to compromise sufficiently to make any agreement possible. Henry still did not find the time "convenient" to grant his people an English Bible as Tyndale so ardently desired.[152] For Tyndale's part, news from England must have undermined his confidence that the time had come for him to return to his homeland. During the season of Lent in March of 1531, John Frith had made a short trip back to England to encourage the Brethren.[153] Foxe reports that "in short space [Frith] fell into the hatred & deadly pursute of Syr Thomas More, who at that tyme beyng Chaūcelour of Englād, persecuted him both by lande and sea."[154] Frith was detained in Reading, but managed to escape before More's agents could arrive.[155] He would have provided Tyndale with

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[148] William Tyndale, *An exposicion vppon the v. vi. vii. chapters of Matthew which thre chaptres are the keye and the dore of the scripture* (Antwerp, Johannes Graphaeus, 1533), sig. A2r.

[149] Ibid., sig. A4r.

[150] George Joye, *The Prophete Isaye, translated into englysshe, by George Joye* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1531), sig. A5v.

[151] In his discussion of Luther's similar belief in the early 1520s, Mark Edwards has noted the obvious point, "Whatever the cogency of this position from a theological standpoint, in practice Scripture did not interpret itself. Human beings interpret Scripture, and they disagree" [Mark Edwards, *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 109]. In the event, most protestant Bibles did contain extensive prefatory materials and notes.

[152] Hughes, *Royal Tudor Proclamations*, 196.

[153] Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants*, 94–95.

[154] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1563), 497–498.

[155] According to Foxe, Frith managed to win the sympathy of the local schoolmaster, Leonard Cox, by quoting the opening lines of the *Iliad* in Greek. Cox then secured Frith's release.

a firsthand report on the situation in England. On June 19, Vaughn wrote one last letter from Antwerp. He seems to have recognized that nothing would come of his embassy to Tyndale. He told Cromwell, "I pray you help me to come home. I have spoken with Tyndale, and shewed him as you wrote me the King's royal pleasure was, but I find him always singing one note."[156] Things had come to an impasse.

As Frith's experience in March makes clear, Thomas More was busily engaged throughout this period in efforts to destroy the heretical evangelical community in England. In August, More and his allies scored a victory with the execution (and possible recantation) of Thomas Bilney in Norwich.[157] Through his interrogation of George Constantine, More further increased his knowledge of the Brethren's network. Constantine even provided compromising information about Stephen Vaughn and his activities on the Continent. Vaughn wrote worriedly to Cromwell in November 1531:

> I am informed that George Constantine hath of late declared certain things against me before my Lord Chancellor. If it be true, I pray you let me know what things they be. Be you hereof assured, he can declare nothing against me that is truth to hurt me. Peradventure he hath declared that I spake with Tyndale. If so he have done, what hath he therein declared that I myself have not signified to the King's Highness? Peradventure he hath also declared that I laboured Tyndale, upon the King's safe-conduct, to come into England. This also I have signified to his Highness.[158]

After returning to England during the summer, Vaughn was once again in the Low Countries in an effort to open a dialogue with the reformers. Cromwell had instructed him, by order of the king, to approach Frith in May 1531. However, Frith's narrow escape from More several months before made it extremely unlikely that Frith would be open to returning to England so soon.[159]

Vaughn argued in a letter dated November 14 that a more promising avenue would be to make overtures to Robert Barnes, who

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[156] Demaus, *William Tindale*, 359. Presumably, the "one note" was the necessity of granting a vernacular Bible to the English people.

[157] However, as in so many cases of execution/martyrdom, Bilney's legacy and even the actual events surrounding his death remained contested.

[158] Demaus, *William Tindale*, 378–379.

[159] When Frith did visit England again in July 1532, he was apprehended in October and would spend nine months in the Tower of London before his execution in July 1533.

had recently published the first edition of his *Supplication unto King Henry VIII*. Vaughn forwarded a copy of the book to Cromwell and went so far as to ask that his patron would "help that Doctor Barnes might declare the opinions of his book before the King's Majesty."[160] In Barnes, Cromwell and Henry found a possible ally without all the baggage that would have come along with Tyndale. Barnes' *Supplication* of 1531 was his first published English work and it contained elements that would have been very appealing to Henry as he contemplated his future relations with the church and the pope. Barnes was also a Doctor of Divinity and had been the prior of the Augustinian House at Cambridge, while Tyndale had only an M.A. and had never held a position of authority within the church. Finally, Barnes could report Luther's position on the divorce. The decision to reach out to Barnes must not have been too difficult, for arrangements were quickly made for his visit to London. Only a month after Vaughn had endorsed Barnes, the exiled reformer was back in his homeland.[161]

Although Barnes' *Supplication* contained clearly evangelical theology—including a section entitled "Only faythe Justifyet by fore god"—the work begins with a ringing affirmation of the authority of the king within his realm and the obedience due him by all his subjects, both lay and clerical.[162] Barnes declared, "in earth ys there no nother superior power y^{t} belongeth to Englond."[163] Like Tyndale and Fish before him, Barnes argued that the clergy's loyalties were divided between the king and the pope and that when push came to shove they would support the pope. Like Christopher St. German, Barnes concluded that the church courts were exercising an illegal jurisdiction.[164] Henry's difficulties with the pope and his anger at failed efforts to get his marriage to Catherine annulled made him more receptive to such arguments. In January, at Cromwell's direction, Parliament had already

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[160] Demaus, *William Tindale*, 379–380. This echoes Barnes' own appeal in his book for an audience with the king [Barnes, *Supplication unto Henry VIII* (1531), sig. B5v].

[161] Frith, who had seen the terms of the safe-conduct, reported that it had only one condition, that Barnes arrive "before the feaste of christmas thē next insuynig" (Frith, *A Book Made by John Frith*, sig. J1v–2r).

[162] Barnes, *Supplication unto Henry* VIII (1531), sig. E4v.

[163] Ibid., sig. B1r.

[164] Joan Lockwood O'Donovan, *Theology of Law and Authority in the English Reformation* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991) 3; Haas, *Years Without a Policy?*, 411–412.

brought charges of *praemunire* against all England's clergy gathered together in their two Convocations for "having exercised the jurisdiction of the Courts Christian within the realm."[165] Although the king subsequently pardoned them of this offence, the episode did result in a fine of £100,000 and an acknowledgment that Henry was the Protector and Supreme Head of the church "as far as the law of Christ allowed."[166] Barnes' arguments in his *Supplication* could be used to support this new direction in government policy.

At the same time, Barnes' book also repeats many of the positions that had been and would remain central elements of Tyndale's writings. Like Tyndale, Barnes appealed to the doctrine of the two regiments in an effort to encourage the king to curtail the power of the clergy. He declared, "Here is playne that your grace must haue fulle power over al worldlye courses, and the bysshops allonly mynistracion of the worde of God: and as your grace maye not vsurpe to preache the worde of god, no more maye they vsurpre any power y^{t} belōgeth to youre swerde."[167] He also defended an ecclesiology very much in keeping with that developed by Tyndale, describing the church as a congregation that is strikingly non-hierarchical.[168] Finally, he devotes an entire chapter to the proposition, "It is lawefulle for alle maner of men to reade holy scriptur."[169] More would say of Barnes' *Supplication* in his *Confutation* preface, "surely of all theyr bookes that yet came abrode in englysshe…was neuer none yet so bad, so folysshe, nor so false, as hys."[170]

Yet, despite More's evaluation of the *Supplication*, the book did help to pave the way for Barnes' safe conduct, which must have troubled the chancellor greatly despite the fact that he attributed Barnes' presence

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[165] Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 274–275. England's clergy were represented by two Convocations, official assemblies of the archdioceses of Canterbury and York. The Convocation of Canterbury was the most influential given its proximity to the capital and the fact that it represented the largest and most populous regions of the country.

[166] This qualifying proviso could be interpreted in very different ways. Convocation viewed this phrase as essentially undercutting any innovative claims to royal authority over the church. Henry, however, with his growing sense of a personal responsibility for the souls of his subjects would have interpreted the clause as implying no curtailment of his power.

[167] Barnes, *Supplication unto Henry* VIII (1531), sig. B8r.

[168] Ibid., sig. H4v.

[169] Ibid., sig. N4v.

[170] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. Bb1v.

in London merely to the king's "blessed disposycyon."[171] Although both Richard Bayfield and John Tewkesbury were condemned by the church and executed for heresy in December of 1531, More could do nothing as one of the leading English reformers moved freely about at court. Likewise, although Stephen Vaughn wrote worriedly to Cromwell on December 6 to express once more his fear of the chancellor, it appears that Cromwell was able to shield his agent from More's wrath. Robert Barnes' audience with Henry was by no means a great success. Barnes did not bring the message from Luther regarding the divorce for which Henry was hoping. Further, Barnes was too radical theologically for the king's taste.[172] Nevertheless, 1531 had witnessed a concerted effort on the part of Cromwell, acting with Henry's consent, to reach out to the English reformers. Despite the fact that he might not find Tyndale and his associates palatable personally, their anticlericalism, their attacks on the pope, and their teachings on obedience were clearly coming to be seen as potentially useful.

III. *Conclusion: More's Position Becomes Untenable*

This period, 1531 through the early months of 1532, also witnessed other signs that must have troubled Thomas More. The king's "great matter," which had played an important role in Cardinal Wolsey's fall and thus in More's elevation as Lord Chancellor, had more and more come to dominate Henry's attention. Although More refused to comment publicly on the divorce, he had made clear to the king that his conscience would not allow him to accept its validity. Henry had responded, "if he could not therein with his conscience serue him, he was well content to accept of his seruice otherwise."[173] However, it clearly irked the king that his most prominent minister would not support him in the matter closest to his heart. Henry continued to put pressure on More to declare openly for the king's cause.[174] In March 1531, More was required to appear before both houses of Parliament and to explain the king's case for the divorce, assuring them that Henry was motivated solely by his conscience. This must have been,

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[171] More, *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, sig. Bb1r.
[172] Haas, *Years Without a Policy?*, 418.
[173] Thus More's son-in-law Roper would later relate the story told him by More (Roper, *The Life of Sir Thomas More*, 81).
[174] Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography*, 361–362.

as Henry intended it, an incredibly awkward experience as More was made to voice arguments and to defend a position he did not personally accept.

Even more ominously, the question of the divorce had become closely tied to another more general development, the emergence of what J.J. Scarisbrick has called 'Henricianism.' This had three main constituent elements: 1) that the king had a God-given responsibility for the spiritual well-being of his subjects, 2) that he was the supreme head of the national church, and 3) that he was not bound by papal obedience.[175] While the difficulties surrounding the king's "great matter" certainly contributed to a more aggressive airing of these ideas, Henricianism was a distinct phenomenon and it would be a mistake to accept too quickly the often repeated view that if Catherine had given Henry a male heir the English Reformation never would have happened. The *praemunire* charges of early 1531 demonstrated that the government had already decided to act on these beliefs, which were coalescing in Henry VIII's mind.[176] Ambassador Chapuys reported in March 22, 1531, that Henry had intervened in a heresy case overseen by the Archbishop of Canterbury and that the king had declared that one of the articles brought against the offending individual—that the pope was not head of the church—was not heretical.[177]

The early months of 1532 would see an even more sustained attack by the government on the pope and the church. When Parliament opened its new session in January, it quickly fell to debating several issues of great importance and consequence. In March, the issue of annates, the obligation of bishops to forward most of their first year's income to Rome, was heatedly discussed. This practice constituted the single greatest source of papal income from England and was condemned as an unjust extraction of national wealth and resources.[178]

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[175] Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 287–288.

[176] Scarisbrick has argued that during this period, after the fall of Wolsey but before the ascendancy of Cromwell, Henry was "the effective author (which is not to call him the absolute initiator) of policy" (Ibid., 292). Indeed, in his more recent biography of Henry VIII, G.W. Bernard has argued forcefully that Henry was the driving force behind government policy throughout the years of the Reformation [G.W. Bernard, *The King's Reformation: Henry VIII and the Remaking of the English Church* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 62, 72, 240–243, 475].

[177] Schuster, "Thomas More's Polemical Career," 1246.

[178] Haas, *Years Without a Policy?*, 505. Threatening the flow of this major source of income to Rome was a useful means of putting pressure on the pope to offer a favorable ruling in Henry's divorce case.

During this same period, the *Supplication against the Ordinaries*, a long list of perceived abuses against the English clergy, was also circulating. On April 12, the *Supplication* was presented to Convocation, who responded aggressively in their own *Answer of the Ordinaries*. This text, in the composition of which Thomas More probably played some role, defended the traditional liberties and prerogatives of the church and its independence from the authority of the king.[179]

This stiff opposition greatly angered Henry. The chronicler Edward Hall, himself a party to parliamentary events during this period, reports that on May 11 the king declared to a delegation from the House of Commons, "welbeloued subiectes, we thought that y^{e} clergie of our realme, had been our subiectes wholly, but now wee haue well perceiued that they bee but halfe our subiectes, yea, and scace our subiectes…"[180]

These words echo sentiments we have previously observed in the writings of Tyndale, Fish, and Barnes.[181] The day before, on May 10, Henry had escalated the situation by demanding that the clergy accede to three propositions: that Convocation could only meet with the king's permission, that they could not issue any legislation without his consent, and that all existing church laws were subject to review by a commission appointed by the king. Despite initial hesitation, on May 15 ecclesiastical authorities felt compelled to submit to the king. The next day, May 16, 1532, More resigned the chancellorship.[182]

More would devote much of his time over the next two years, before his arrest in April 1534, to his literary campaign against the English reformers, producing five additional polemical works.[183] However, the

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[179] Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography*, 411.

[180] Hall, *Hall's Chronicle*, 788.

[181] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. D8v–E1r, G7v, T8r; Fish, *Supplication of the Beggars*, fol. 5v. Barnes' *Supplication unto Henry VIII*, sig. B1r.

[182] It has generally been suggested that More's resignation was an act of protest. However, Richard Marius points out that while More had long wished to resign and would have seen the submission of the clergy as clear evidence of a governmental policy he could not support, it was probably Henry who forced More's resignation on May 15 (Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography*, 416). In a letter to Erasmus in June, More suggested that his resignation was motivated by health concerns [Elizabeth Frances Rogers, ed., *St. Thomas More: Selected Letters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), 173]. Those in the know certainly recognized that More's fall from power was a sign of much more momentous developments.

[183] Both Robert Barnes and George Joye, who would soon find circumstances so altered in England that they could safely return to their homeland, noted More's fall in their writings of 1534 [George Joye, *Jeremy the Prophete, translated into Englisshe*

former chancellor was becoming progressively more isolated from and out of step with Henry VIII and his regime. These same years witnessed the legislative revolution that would break England's ties with the papacy and institute the royal supremacy. In the polemical campaign through which the government sought to explain and justify these momentous changes, there would be many resonances of ideas earlier developed by the English reformers in exile. Tyndale's works, in particular, "provided a ready-made and accessible ideology with which to buttress the transfer of obedience from the papacy to the monarchy."[184] The next chapter will look more carefully at Tyndale's political thought and its relationship to the royal supremacy and the propaganda campaign that accompanied it.

(Antwerp, Merten de Keyser{?}, 1534), sig. N5r; Robert Barnes, *A supplicacion vnto the most gracious prynce H. the .viii* (London, John Byddell, 1534), sig. M4r].

[184] Rex, "Crisis of Obedience," 873.

CHAPTER FIVE

WILLIAM TYNDALE, HENRY VIII, AND THE ROYAL SUPREMACY

I. *Henry VIII: "Defender of the Faith" and "Supreme Head of the Church of England"*

In his recently revised work, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation*, Richard Rex has argued that a proper understanding of the royal supremacy must lie at the heart of any valid account of the reformation in England. In Rex's words, "The single determining event of Henry VIII's Reformation was the establishment of the royal supremacy over the Church of England. Without this, the changes which ensued would hardly have been possible and, if possible, would certainly have been different."[1] This view reflects the consensus of a wide range of scholars over the last half century that the reformation in England was largely a top-down phenomenon.[2] Certainly in the early sixteenth century, there was little doubt that power to preserve or to change the existing religious order was perceived to lie first and foremost with Henry VIII (r.1509–1547). This is evident in the fact that both conservatives and reformers appealed repeatedly to the king for his support.[3]

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[1] Richard Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation, 2nd Ed.* (New York: Palgrave, 2006), xiii.

[2] G.R. Elton developed the top-down interpretation in *Reform and Reformation: England 1509–1558* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), a still influential political history of the period that explored the mechanisms whereby Henry VIII and his chief minister Thomas Cromwell orchestrated a legislative revolution. The revisionists, most prominent among them J.J. Scarisbrick, Eamon Duffy, and Christopher Haigh, have also advocated a top-down interpretation of the Reformation, although they have done so by demonstrating the vitality of parochial religion and the lack of any widespread discontent with the English church [J.J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (New York: Blackwell, 1984), Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c. 1400–c. 1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), and Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993)].

[3] That appeals to the king could serve the purposes of both reformers and conservatives is evident in a letter of the Bishop of Norwich to the Archbishop of Canterbury from May of 1531 complaining about rumors that Henry VIII condoned the reading

Such appeals took place in the midst of ongoing and heated debates about exactly what Henry's role in and relationship to the English church ought to be. The complexity of the situation and the range of possible views are reflected in the various ways in which different writers appealed to and interpreted Henry's title, "Defender of the Faith."[4] In his *Supplication of Souls* of 1529, Thomas More would remind his readers of Henry's title "defensoure of the fayth gyvē his grace by the see apostolyque" and would argue that "the good & gracyouse catholyke mynde… borne by the kynges hyghnes to the catholyk fayth" was well known.[5] However, as the previous chapter demonstrated, More was actually at odds with Henry regarding Simon Fish and his recently published *Supplication of the Beggars*, which More was attempting to refute. As such, his reference to Henry's title was intended to remind the king of his responsibilities to the Catholic Church.[6] The chancellor probably also hoped to circumscribe Henry's freedom of action by reinforcing the king's public image as a staunch defender of Catholic orthodoxy.[7]

Several of the exiled English reformers also appealed to Henry's title, although they unsurprisingly argued that the faith he should defend must be understood in light of the new evangelical theology. In the midst of the section of his *Supplication unto Henry VIII* (1531) entitled "Only faythe Justifyeth by fore god," Robert Barnes declared:

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of certain heretical books, among them Tyndale's New Testament. Bishop Nix asked that representatives of the king be sent to his diocese to "shew and publiche that it is not his pleasure that suche bokes shuld be had or red" [Alfred Pollard, ed., *Records of the English Bible: The Documents Relating to the Translation and Publication of the Bible in English, 1525–1611* (London: Oxford University Press, 1911), 159–161]. The circulation of such rumors reminds us that one did not have to actually address the king personally in order to appeal to him.

[4] Pope Leo X had granted Henry VIII the title *Defensor Fidei* in October 1521. Scarisbrick points out that the pope did not intend it as a hereditary title and that it would be an act of Parliament in 1543 that made it the perpetual possession of Henry's heirs, which it has remained down to the present [J.J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 117)].

[5] Thomas More, *A supplcacyon of soulys made by syr Thomas More knight* (London, William Rastell, 1529), sig. E1r, E4r.

[6] Louis Schuster has suggested that, "In spite of the 'simple folk' it purports to address… one soon discovers that More wrote the book primarily for Henry" [Louis Schuster, "Thomas More's Polemical Career, 1523–1533," in Louis Schuster, Richard Marius, James Lusardi, and Richard Schoeck, eds., *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More, Vol. 8, Pt. III* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 1202].

[7] J. Christopher Warner, *Henry VIII's Divorce: Literature and the Politics of the Printing Press* (Rochester: The Boydell Press, 1998), 49.

> they gaue vn to youre grace The tytylle of defending of faythe, but they neuer declaryed what it was, but alle ways lefte your grace to the name of faythe and to the olde opyniō that went of faithe but neuer clearly set out what it wasse.[8]

Barnes expressed his hope that Henry would become a defender of the true faith the reformers had rediscovered. Four years later, Miles Coverdale returned to the same theme. Recalling the high priest Caiphas' prophecy in John 18:14 that one man should die for the people, Coverdale continued: "Even after the same maner y^{e} blynde bysshoppe of Rome . . . not vnderstondyne what he dyd, gaue vnto your grace this title: defendour of the fayth, onely bycause your hyghnes suffred your bysshoppes to burne Gods worde."[9] Although Henry had once been a defender of the papacy and an enemy of the reformers, Coverdale argued that God had intended the title to refer to Henry's future actions as a reforming monarch in the mold of the Old Testament King Josiah.[10]

William Tyndale's references to the king's title do not express the same confidence that Henry could be relied upon to become an agent of reform. Indeed, these references reveal his divergence from most of his contemporaries when it came to the role of the king in reforming the church. In his *Practice of Prelates* of 1530, Tyndale mentions Henry's title twice. He first acknowledges it in an aside during a discussion of the ways in which the pope had manipulated Europe's rulers throughout history. He notes that the pope had given the French monarchs the title "most Christen kinge" but then editorializes, "though manye of them be neuer so vnchrystened."[11] It is after this none too flattering statement that he observes that "the laste Leo called oure kynge the defender of the faith."[12] The context clearly suggests Tyndale's view that any title given by the pope was tainted and that it certainly did not imply any particular worthiness on the part of the title's

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[8] Robert Barnes, *A supplication made by Robert Barnes doctoure in diuinite, vnto the most excellent and redoubted prince kinge henrye the eyght* (Antwerp, Simon Cock, 1531), sig. G8v.

[9] Miles Coverdale, *Biblia The Bible, that is, the holy Scripture of the Olde and New Testament* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1535), sig. ⋕2r.

[10] Ibid., sig. ⋕3v.

[11] William Tyndale, *The practyse of Prelates. Whether the Kinges grace maye be separated from hys queen, be cause she was his brothers wyfe* (Antwerp, Hoochstraten, 1530), sig. C3r.

[12] Ibid., sig. C3r.

recipient. This interpretation is further substantiated by a later reference in the same book in which he attributes the title to Cardinal Wolsey's machinations. In this second passage Tyndale includes Henry among the "greate men which will walke withoute the feare of god folowinge the steppes of the hye prelates contrary vnto their profession."[13]

As the previous examples indicate, the title "Defender of the Faith" was sufficiently vague that individuals from across the religious spectrum could interpret it in ways compatible with their own positions. However, this was not the only title that Henry claimed for himself. In early 1531, after the *praemunire* charge was brought against England's clergy, Henry demanded that Convocation recognize him as "sole protector and only supreme head of the English Church."[14] This implied a degree of caesaropapism not associated with the designation "Defender of the Faith." The ecclesiastical hierarchy immediately recognized the profoundly innovative nature of the new title and attempted to resist this encroachment of royal authority into the religious sphere. Bishop Cuthbert Tunstal of Durham wrote directly to Henry in protest. While Convocation did acknowledge Henry as the head of the church, it qualified this recognition with the important proviso "as far as the law of Christ allowed." This tense encounter between the king and the clergy was merely a sign of things to come.

The next few years witnessed a concerted and ultimately successful effort by the government to develop and substantiate the king's claims to headship over the English church. In the spring of 1533, Parliament passed the Act in Restraint of Appeals, which forbade appeals to authorities outside the realm, i.e. the pope. This made it possible to resolve the king's "great matter" in England and Archbishop Cranmer quickly ruled the king's first marriage invalid in May. The government also issued printed propaganda in an effort to justify this curtailment of the pope's traditional judicial authority. The anonymous author of *The glasse of truthe* had argued, "me thinketh the kinges highness and his parliament shulde ernestly prese the metropolitanes of this realme…to set an ende shortly to this."[15] Although the Act in

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[13] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. K4v. In *Obedience of a Christian Man*, Tyndale had spoken of how the popes manipulated kings by giving them "vayne names" and had called Henry "Defender of the popis faith" (Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. G5v, E6v).

[14] Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 275.

[15] Anonymous, *The glasse of the truthe* (London, Thomas Berthelet, 1532{?}), sig. F2r–v.

Restraint of Appeals was a significant step towards the royal supremacy, it was primarily an attack on certain claims to papal jurisdiction rather than on the office of the pope himself and the propaganda of this period reflects this distinction.[16]

In 1534 the regime went further, partially in response to the king's threatened excommunication by Clement VII the previous summer, but also as a natural working out of the program that Henry VIII and Cromwell had chosen to implement.[17] The propagandists patronized by the government became more blatant in their attacks on the pope, to whom they began to refer as merely "the bishop of Rome."[18] Thomas Swinnerton argued that "all suche auctoritie and power, as the pope had…was not immediately gyuen hym by god, but he had it granted him by kinges and princes…or els came by it by wronge vsurpation and tyranny."[19] Major pieces of legislation in early 1534, such as the Succession Act and the Act for the Submission of the Clergy, reaffirmed the repudiation of papal authority and provided a statutory basis for the submission of the English clergy to the king achieved two years before.[20] However, Henry's new position as head of the English church found its fullest expression in the Act of Supremacy passed late in 1534. The Act declared:

> Albeit the King's Majesty justly and rightfully is and ought to be the Supreme Head of the Church of England, and so is recognized by the clergy of this realm in their Convocations; yet nevertheless for corroboration and confirmation thereof…[b]e it enacted by authority of this present Parliament that the King our Sovereign Lord, his heirs and successors kings of this realm, shall be taken, accepted, and reputed the

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[16] Franklin Le Van Baumer, *The Early Tudor Theory of Kingship* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), 28–29; Richard Rex, "The Crisis of Obedience: God's Word and Henry's Reformation," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (1996): 877–879.

[17] The excommunication was first discussed in July 1533, but it was decided to delay its actual implementation until September to give Henry an opportunity to reconcile himself to the Catholic Church. In actuality, it would be more than five years before Rome recognized and acknowledged exactly how far from the fold Henry VIII had wandered and officially condemned him (Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 317–318, 334, 361–362).

[18] Rex, "Crisis of Obedience," 879.

[19] Thomas Swinnerton, *A litel treatise ageynste the mutterynge of some papists in corners* (London, Thomas Berthelet, 1534), sig. A3r.

[20] The same parliamentary session also saw the passage of the Act of Dispensation, the Act in Absolute Restraint of Annates, and a new Heresy Act, which consolidated the king's control over various functions of the church previously subject to papal oversight.

> only Supreme head in earth of the Church of England… and shall have and enjoy annexed and united to the imperial Crown of this realm as well the title and style thereof, as all honours, dignities, pre-eminences, jurisdictions, privileges, authorities, immunities, profits, and commodities, to the said dignity.[21]

Henry had now received full recognition of the title he had so audaciously claimed three years earlier.

The government immediately sought to commit the realm to the new dynastic, political, and religious situation by administering an oath of succession to all adult males throughout the country.[22] The implementation of the royal supremacy, despite some initial resistance in Parliament and Convocation, ultimately faced little organized opposition, particularly after the clergy submitted to the king in May 1532.[23] In 1534, only a few conservatives refused to take the oath or to recognize the king's headship. Thomas More was among them although, unlike Bishop Fisher of Rochester, he chose not to speak out against the king. However, More's silence was not enough to save him and in early July 1534 he was found guilty of treason. Only after his condemnation did More speak his mind clearly. According to his son-in-law William Roper's account, More declared at the conclusion of his trial that:

> this Iudgment is grounded vpon an Act of Parlament directly repugnāt to the laws of God & his holy Church the supreme gouernement of which, or any part therof, no temporall Prince may presume by any temporall law, to take vpon him, as rightfully belonging to the Sea of Rome.[24]

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[21] Quoted in Sidney Ehler and John Morrall, eds., *Church and State through the Centuries: A Collection of Historic Documents with Commentaries* (New York: Biblio and Tanners Booksellers, 1988), 164.

[22] For further discussion of the legal and political significance of this effort, refer to G.R. Elton, *Policy and Police: The Enforcement of the Reformation in the Age of Thomas Cromwell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 222–227.

[23] Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 328–332. This is certainly not to suggest that Henry's and Cromwell's political and religious revolution was popular, merely that few people felt the traditional prerogatives of the distant pope or even of the English clergy to be worth the sacrifice of their lives. For a more extensive discussion of the various sources of opposition Henry and his regime faced, refer to the second chapter of G.W. Bernard's *The King's Reformation: Henry VIII and the Remaking of the English Church* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

[24] William Roper, *The mirrour of virtue in worldly greatnes. Or The life of Syr Thomas More Knight* (Paris, 1626 <1557>), 152–153. As with Vaughn's report of Tyndale's statements discussed in the previous chapter, the historian is dependent upon a second-hand account of More's speech. The fact that Roper was writing primarily for a Catholic audience who would likely have regarded More as a martyr who died for

More had taken a principled stand and it would cost him his life. On July 6, 1535, he went to the block at the Tower of London.

Where Thomas More saw a grave threat to the well-being and autonomy of the Catholic Church, many of the English reformers saw the dawn of a new day for the church in England. They were quick to throw their apparent support behind the royal supremacy. In 1535, Coverdale appealed in the preface to his English Bible to "Kynge Henry the eyght…Defendour of the fayth, and vnder God the chefe and supreme heade of the Church of Englonde."[25] The way the paratext of the volume is organized, with a repetition of the books of the Old Testament on signatures ⫩1v & ⫩7v, and the fact that there is an extra leaf with the final paragraphs of the address "To the reader" between signatures ⫩8v and a1r, may suggest that the paratext was redone and that the address to Henry was added fairly late in production. Coverdale clearly believed that Tyndale's desire for an authorized English Bible, expressed on several occasions to Stephen Vaughn in 1531, might now be at hand.[26]

Robert Barnes went even further than Coverdale and did so more quickly. In November 1534, Barnes issued a radically revised edition of his *Supplication unto Henry VIII* from the press of John Byddell in London, having returned to his homeland in the hope that the time for true reform had come at last.[27] When Barnes' *Supplication* was included by John Foxe in his *Whole Workes* in 1573 it was a composite text drawing on both earlier editions and the preface to the work explained that Barnes' book had at first been "corruptlye Printed

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his adherence to the Catholic Church suggests the rhetorical and hagiographical forces at work. However, the general thrust of More's statement as recorded by Roper appears to be in keeping with More's views on the nature and authority of the church as discussed in Chapter Two. For more discussion of More's trial and the relevant sources, see William Rockett, "The Case against Thomas More," *Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (2008): 1065–1093.

[25] Coverdale, *Biblia The Bible*, sig. ⫩2r.

[26] The broader significance of this Bible, the first complete printed English Bible ever produced, will be considered more fully in the following chapter.

[27] Robert Barnes, *A supplicacion vnto the most gracious prynce H. the .viii* (London, John Byddell, 1534), sig. C2r. James Lusardi has observed that few scholars have noted the fact that Barnes essentially wrote "two books under the same name" [James Lusardi, "The Career of Robert Barnes," in Louis Schuster, Richard Marius, James Lusardi, and Richard Schoeck, eds., *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More, Vol. 8, Pt. III* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 1372.

beyonde the Seas."[28] However, Cargill Thompson has concluded, "the evidence suggests that many of the changes in the 1534 edition were political in character and there is reason to believe that the work was deliberately revised to meet the needs of the new situation created by the abolition of papal jurisdiction and the establishment of the Royal Supremacy."[29] For example, while the first edition had focused primarily on the corruption of the bishops and had advocated an ecclesiology centered on local congregations, the 1534 edition directed its attack primarily at the pope and accepted with little hesitation the episcopal organization of the church. Although he kept the section on justification by faith, Barnes moderated his earlier position on the relationship between faith and good works.[30] Several sections, such as his advocacy of the laity partaking of the Eucharist in both kinds, were removed.

Perhaps the most significant change in light of the royal supremacy was Barnes' decision to remove a section entitled "Mens constitucions which be not grounded in scripture bynde not the consciens of man vnder the payne of deadly synne."[31] In the 1531 edition, Barnes had followed Tyndale and Luther in maintaining a firm distinction between the two regiments.[32] However, by 1534 Barnes was willing to acknowledge Henry's headship over the church. As Clebsch has explained, "The duty of obedience to the king which Barnes originally taught as applicable only to temporal matters was extended in 1534 to all spiritual matters save one, so that the only choices open to the

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[28] John Foxe, ed., *The whole workes of W. Tyndall, Iohn Frith, and Doct. Barnes, three worthy Martyrs, and principall teachers of this Church of England, collected and compiled in one Tome together, beyng before scattered, & now in Print here exhibited to the Churche* (London, John Day, 1573), 358.

[29] W.D.J. Cargill Thompson, "The Sixteenth-Century Editions of A Supplication Unto King Henry the Eighth by Robert Barnes, D.D.: A Footnote in the History of the Royal Supremacy," *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, Vol. 3 (1959–63): 134.

[30] In particular, Barnes removed an earlier attack on the canonicity of the book of James in which he had followed Luther closely [William Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants 1520–1535* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 66–67].

[31] Barnes, *Supplication unto Henry VIII* (1531), beginning on sig. O8v. Discussing this section, Christopher Morris argued, "Barnes shows some signs of wishing to exclude the civil ruler from ecclesiastical government altogether, even in 'things indifferent.' We must obey unconditionally in all 'worldly things' but in all other-worldly things we ought not really 'to be subject to any man'" [Christopher Morris, *Political Thought in England: Tyndale to Hooker* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 39].

[32] Barnes, *Supplication unto Henry VIII* (1531), sig. B8r, O8v.

Christian were to obey or flee."[33] This development in Barnes' views on the relationship between the temporal and spiritual spheres reflects pragmatic considerations, but must also be understood in relation to developments on the Continent. From about 1530, Lutheran princes and theologians had both begun to observe the distinction between the two regiments less faithfully.[34] At the same time, Swiss reformers had begun to advocate what Torrance Kirby has called "a 'high' view of the civil magistrate's ecclesiastical jurisdiction" over the church, frequently justified by appeals to the reforming kings of the Old Testament.[35]

Interestingly, William Tyndale's writings reveal very little evidence that he ever envisioned an arrangement like the royal supremacy or that he would have supported Henry VIII's claims to headship over the English church in anything like the form they assumed in the mid 1530s. Tyndale's dismissal of Henry's title "Defender of the Faith" in his *Practice of Prelates* has already been noted.[36] To be sure, his negative view of the king's title reflects the fact that he wrote earlier than some of his fellow reformers, before Henry had shown any signs that he might be sympathetic to some elements of the reformers' program. However, an examination of Tyndale's political thought will demonstrate that throughout his career he consistently argued for a limited role for the monarch in the religious sphere. This reflects his generally negative view of kings, who he called "the blynde powers of y^{e} worlde."[37] Tyndale's political thought was also shaped by his enduring commitment to the early form of the Lutheran doctrine of the two regiments, which is evident in *Obedience of a Christian Man* (1528) and which received its fullest development in his last major exegetical

[33] Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants*, 64. Barnes held that there could be no compromise on the issue of access to vernacular scripture for the laity and that Christians should not obey commands to surrender their English Bibles.

[34] Robert Bast, "From Two Kingdoms to Two Tablets: The Ten Commandments and the Christian Magistrate," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, Vol. 89 (1998): 80.

[35] W.J. Torrance Kirby, *The Zurich Connection and Tudor Political Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 27.

[36] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. C3r, K4v.

[37] William Tyndale, *The obediẽce of a Christen man and how Christẽ rulers ought to governe* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1528), sig. A2v. In both *Obedience* and *Practice of Prelates*, some of the first rulers Tyndale mentioned were Herod and Pilate, hardly desirable company with whom to associate contemporary kings (Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. A3r; Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. A2r [followed by a reference to evil King Ahab on sig. A5v]).

work, his *Exposition upon Matthew V, VI, VII* (1533).[38] This chapter will examine in more detail the nature of Tyndale's political thought, its more general place within his wider theological system, and its connections to and tensions with the royal supremacy as it took shape in the 1530s.

II. *Tyndale on the King and the Two Regiments*

Tyndale's association with the royal supremacy is long-standing. Cargill Thompson has observed, "In so far as there is a popular view of Tyndale as a political thinker it is contained in the widespread belief that he was an exponent of royal absolutism, and also that he foreshadowed the royal supremacy."[39] This idea turns up in both studies of English political thought and in more general works on the period, such as J.J. Scarisbrick's biography of Henry VIII, where Tyndale's *Obedience of a Christian Man* is described as "the first thorough-going apologia of Caesaropapism."[40] As Scarisbrick's statement indicates, such evaluations have largely been built on a few striking passages from the *Obedience*, Tyndale's most well-known work, particularly from the section on "The obedience of Subiectes vn to kynges princes and rulers." Here Tyndale proclaimed, "God hath made the kīge in every realme iudge over all ād over him is there no iudge. He y^{t} iudgeth the kinge iudgeth God & he that layeth hādes on the kīge layth hāde on God ād he that resisteth the kinge resisteth God."[41] A little later he declared, "y^{e} kinge is in this worlde without lawe & maye at his lust doo right or wronge and shall geve a comptes but to God only."[42]

However, to focus on just these isolated remarks is to miss their broader context in Tyndale's *Obedience of a Christian Man* and in his

[38] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. G1v; William Tyndale, *An exposicion vppon the v. vi. vii. chapters of Matthew which thre chaptres are the keye and the dore of the scripture* (Antwerp, Johannes Graphaeus, 1533), sig. g3v, h1v.

[39] W.D.J. Cargill Thompson, "The Two Regiments: The Continental Setting of William Tyndale's Political Thought," in Derek Baker, ed., *Reform and Reformation: England and the Continent c. 1500–c. 1750* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979), 18. Thompson, at least, acknowledges that "it is misleading to think he [Tyndale] would necessarily have approved of the royal supremacy as it emerged in the mid 1530s" (Thompson, "Tyndale's Political Thought," 20).

[40] Morris, *Political Thought in England*, 25–26; Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 247.

[41] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. D7v–8r.

[42] Ibid., sig. D8v.

other writings as well. What did Tyndale set out to accomplish in the *Obedience*? The answer is to be found primarily in the prefatory sections, "William Tyndale…vnto the Reader" and "The Prologe vnto the boke," which fills forty-six pages of the text.[43] Here one learns that one of Tyndale's central purposes in addressing the topic of obedience was to counter the claims of the reformers' conservative opponents that evangelical writings and the doctrines they espouse "causeth insurrection and teacheth the people to disobeye their heedes and governers and moveth them to ryse agenst their princes."[44] He explains, "Therfore have I made this litle treatyse…[in] which (who so ever readeth it) shall easely perceive not y^{e} cōtrary only and that they lye: but also the very cause of soch blasphemy."[45]

This Catholic attack on the teaching of the reformers was at one level theological, for the conservatives argued that by making justification a matter of faith apart from works, the reformers undermined both morality and the individual's obedience to ecclesiastical and political authorities. As More formulated the charge in his *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, "they be in a full fredome and lybarty discharged of all gouernours & all maner lawys spyrytuall or temporall except the gospell only."[46] There are certainly passages in Tyndale's writings which seem to suggest that true believers are no longer subject to the law. In his *Introduction to Romans* he spoke of living "evē as though there were no lawe at all."[47] However, such statements were always made in the context of discussions of justification, not when Tyndale was talking about morality or submission to authority. As such, Tyndale

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[43] Thompson's summary of the work, for example, largely ignores these sections, which set the stage for the more detailed discussion of social and political structures that follows (Thompson, "Tyndale's Political Thought," 23). The same can be said of Richard's Rex's explanation of the book's contents [Richard Rex, "The Crisis of Obedience: God's Word and Henry's Reformation." *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (1996): 865].

[44] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. C5r. See also, Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. A3r.

[45] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. C5r.

[46] Thomas More, *A dyaloge of syr Thomas More knyghte…touchyng the pestilent secte of Luther & Tyndale* (London, John Rastell, 1529), sig. A5v. Tyndale would later argue that the scribes and Pharisees had made the same accusations about Jesus, charging that he sought "to destroye the law, & to set the people at a fleshly lybertie, and to make them first disobedient and to despice their spirituall prelates, and then to rise agaynst the tēporall rulers and to make all comune, and to giue lycence to synne vnpunysshed" (Tyndale, *Exposition upon Matthew V–VII*, sig. d7r).

[47] William Tyndale, *A compendious introduccion prologe or preface vn to the pistle off Paul to the Romayns* (Worms, Peter Schoeffer, 1526), sig. a4v.

echoes, though not in the same words, the famous distinction in Martin Luther's 1520 treatise *The Freedom of a Christian*, "A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all."[48] More and other Catholic polemicists seem to have either consistently misunderstood, or perhaps willfully misrepresented, the evangelical distinction between justification and sanctification and its implications for the role of good works in the Christian's life.[49]

In addition to theological charges of antinomianism, conservatives such as More could point to recent events as potential evidence of the seditious implications of the reformers' writings. When More charged the reformers with responsibility for the Peasants' War of 1524–1525 and the Sack of Rome in 1527 in his *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* (1529), he was repeating in the English language arguments that were already well-worn on the Continent. In his description of the rebellion of the peasants in Germany, More suggested that what had begun as anti-clerical attacks on the church had quickly threatened secular authority as well, a pattern that he warned would repeat itself in England.[50] More seems to have been particularly shocked by the Sack of Rome by an imperial army in May 1527.[51] He pictures Lutheran heretics roasting children in front of their parents, behaving in ways that would shame even Turks, and inventing tortures that even the devil in hell had never conceived.[52] For the benefit of his almost exclusively English audience, More also recalled Sir John Oldcastle's Lollard

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[48] John Dillenberger, ed., *Martin Luther: Selections From His Writings* (New York: Anchor Books, 1962), 53.

[49] For further discussion of More's and Tyndale's conflicting views on justification see Chapter Two. For an example of More dismissing the distinction between justification and sanctification, see Thomas More, *The second parte of the cōfutacion of Tyndals answere* (London, William Rastell, 1533), sig. c2r. At other times, however, More expressed a much more nuanced view of the relationship between justification and good works [Thomas More, *The cōfutacyon of Tyndales answere made by Thomas More knght lorde chaūcellor of Englonde* (London, William Rastell, 1532), sig. b3r]. Antinomianism was one potential danger of the Protestant emphasis on *sola fide*, and both Luther and Tyndale were always careful to guard against it. In 1538, Luther published a treatise entitled *Against the Antinomians*.

[50] More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. S5v; More, *Supplication of Souls*, sig. D2v–3r. He returned to the topic again in his *Confutation* (More, *Second Part of the Confutation*, sig. m1v).

[51] It is important to note, although More makes no reference to the fact, that the majority of the soldiers involved were Catholics rather than Lutherans.

[52] More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. S8v.

uprising in 1414 as a domestic example of the kind of rebellion and sedition he feared.[53]

The response of Luther and Tyndale to such accusations was to insist repeatedly that they did not encourage or condone such violence.[54] In a vehement work entitled *Against the Murderous, Thieving Hordes of Peasants*, Luther condemned the German peasants for misinterpreting his teachings on Christian liberty as early as May 1525.[55] Among the English reformers, Tyndale defined the default position when he argued in *Obedience of a Christian Man* that only passive resistance was acceptable and then only in cases where authorities commanded something explicitly forbidden by scripture. In all other cases, had not "Christe him selfe taught all obedience how that it is not lawfull to resist wronge"?[56] He would reiterate this position in 1530 in his *Practice of Prelates*, while Robert Barnes would make it yet again in his *Supplication* of 1531.[57] Three years later, after the religious and political situation in England had begun to change, Barnes would declare, "I dare say boldely, let all your bokes be serched, that were written this .v.C. yeres & all they shal not so declare the auctorite of a prince, and the true obedience towarde hym, as one of our lytle bokes shall do."[58] The reformers' strong statements on the duty of obedience to kings must be understood in light of the earlier attacks of their conservative opponents.

In his *Obedience of a Christian Man*, Tyndale sought to turn the tables on his adversaries, arguing that it was actually the ecclesiastical hierarchy that was ultimately responsible for encouraging people to

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[53] More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. U6r.

[54] All reformers were not in agreement about the unacceptability of violence, a reality evident from the fact that Ulrich Zwingli died while leading a Swiss army at the Battle of Kappel in 1531.

[55] Tyndale also defended Luther against such accusations (Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. A4v–5r).

[56] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. C7r. See also, Richard Greaves, "Concepts of Political Obedience in Late Tudor England: Conflicting Perspectives," *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (1982): 23–34.

[57] "Nether teach we so moch as to resist youre most cruell tyranny with bodelye violence saue with goddes worde only" (Tyndale, *The Practice of Prelates*, sig. A3v); "[T]he trew preacher…intendeth to mayntayne nothinge but the worde of god…and ys also neyther able nor likely nor wylling yf he might to make any resurrexion agēst youre grace" [Barnes, *Supplication unto Henry VIII* (1531), sig. A3v]. Note that in 1531, Tyndale's position was also defended in his homeland by the popular preacher Hugh Latimer [John Foxe, *The first volume of the ecclesiasticall history contayynge the actes and monuments* (London, John Day, 1570), 1918].

[58] Barnes, *Supplication unto Henry VIII* (1534), sig. C2r.

disobey the king. First, the prelates had exempted themselves from the king's authority.[59] Second, they demanded the obedience of the people even if this entailed disobedience to secular rulers—"it is the bloudy doctrine of the Pope which causeth disobedience rebellion and insurreccion, for he teacheth to fighte and to defende his tradiciōs & … to disobeye father mother master kynge & Emperoure."[60] In order to obscure their usurpation, Tyndale argued that the pope and the bishops had hidden the scriptures from the laity. Indeed, the clergy's rejection of vernacular scripture and the necessity of making it available to the laity was the other dominant theme of his prefatory remarks in *Obedience of a Christian Man*. For Tyndale, the absence of an English Bible was both a consequence and a cause of the religious situation in his homeland.

The issue of vernacular scripture was so central to his thinking that Tyndale actually chose to open both his epistle "vnto the Reader" and his "Prologe" by addressing the topic. Marginal notes in both places convey concisely Tyndale's perspective. The first reads, "The nature of Gods word is to be persecuted," while the second proclaims, "The ypocrites laye that to gods word whych they thē selves are cause of."[61] In these introductory passages to the book, Tyndale provided one of his most sustained series of arguments in support of an English Bible:

> That thou maist perceive how y^{t} y^{e} scripture ought to be in y^{e} mother tōge and y^{t} y^{e} reasōs which oure sprites make for y^{e} cōtrary are but sophistry & false wiles to feare y^{e} frō y^{e} lighte y^{t} thou mighteste folowe them blynefolde & be their captive to honoure their ceremonies & to offer to their bely.[62]

As with his teachings on obedience, his arguments for a vernacular Bible and his explanation for the church's resistance to its introduction—"I can imagen no cause verily excepte it be that we shulde not se the worke of Antychrist and iugulynge of ypocrites"—would serve as a model for his fellow reformers in exile.[63] Meanwhile, back in England, Hugh Latimer, who had been one of the few reform-minded individuals on a committee charged by the king with evaluating Tyndale's

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[59] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. D4v–5r.
[60] Ibid., sig. C8r.
[61] Ibid., sig. A2r, C5r.
[62] Ibid., sig. B4r.
[63] Ibid., sig. B4v; Simon Fish, *A Supplicacyon for the Beggers* (Antwerp{?}, Johannes Graphaeus, 1529{?}), fol. 6v; Barnes, *Supplication unto Henry VIII* (1531), sig. N4v–O8v.

Obedience and other heretical works in May 1530, would circulate a letter in London defending vernacular scripture later that year.[64]

Both in his *Obedience of a Christian Man* and in later works such as *Practice of Prelates* and his *Exposition upon Matthew V, VI, VII*, Tyndale's criticism of the usurped and abused power of the clergy was consistently developed in the light of the Lutheran doctrine of the two regiments already discussed in Chapter Two.[65] Tyndale argued that while the original biblical duties and responsibilities of the clergy were to teach the people God's Word and to persuade them to live godly lives, they had progressively violated the division between the two regiments and assumed both political authority and coercive power. As he put the situation in *Obedience*, "Bisshoppes they only can minister the temperall swerde, their office the preachinge of Gods worde layde a parte which the will nother doo ner sofre anye man to doo but sley with the temperall swerd (which they have gotten out of the hande of all Princes)."[66] The nature and history of this clerical usurpation would be the primary subject of his *Practice of Prelates* published two years later.[67] Tyndale denounced members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy for separating themselves illegitimately from the authority of temporal rulers and for creating their own kingdom, not only distinct from the secular regiment but supposedly superior to it.[68]

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[64] Allan Chester, *Hugh Latimer: Apostle to the English* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1954), 57–65.

[65] For a brief summary of Luther's views as developed in his 1523 work "Temporal Authority: To What Extent it Should be Obeyed," consider the following statements. He declared, "The temporal government has laws which extend no further than to life and property and external affairs on earth… [it] should be content to attend to its own affairs and let men believe this or that as they are able and willing" [Martin Luther, "Temporal Authority: To What Extent it Should be Obeyed," in Walther Brandt, ed., *Luther's Works, Vol. 45, The Christian in Society, II* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1962), 105, 108]. With regard to ecclesiastical leaders, Luther argued, "Their government is not a matter of authority or power, but a service and an office, for they are neither higher nor better than other Christians… Their ruling is rather nothing more than the inculcating of God's word, by which they guide Christians and overcome heresy" (Luther, "Temporal Authority," 117).

[66] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. E6r.

[67] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. B1r–v.

[68] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. B6v. For echoes of this critique see Fish, *Supplication of the Beggars*, fol. 5v & 3r, and Henry VIII's statement to a delegation from the House of Commons on May 11, 1532, "welbeloued subiectes, we thought that y^{e} clergie of our realme, had been our subiectes wholly, but now wee haue well perceiued that they bee but halfe our subiectes, yea, and scace our subiectes…" [Edward Hall, *Hall's Chronicle; Containing the History of England, During*

Tyndale's glorification of the power of the king and, as a corollary, his insistence that subjects submit to temporal authority, should be seen in this context. By arguing that "one kynge one lawe is Gods ordinaūce in every realme," Tyndale hoped to inspire Henry VIII to curtail the power of the clergy within the temporal regiment.[69] As he wrote just a few lines earlier, "let the kynges put doune some of their tyrany."[70] Tyndale's more extreme statements on temporal authority in his section on "The obedience of Subiectes vn to kynges princes and rulers," quoted earlier, are also motivated by this basic agenda. Right in the midst of this section Tyndale glosses Romans 13 to support his position, "The powers that be are ordened of God. Whosoever therfore resisteth power resisteth God: yee though he be Pope, Bisshope, monke or frère."[71] Given the fierce opposition of the church authorities to the work of Tyndale and his fellow exiles and to their proposed program for the reform of the English church, a curtailment of the church's political and judicial powers would certainly have helped to level the playing field.

It is also worth noting that the manner of Tyndale's discussion of the relationship between political and religious authorities was not likely to please the king even if elements of its content might. The statement that "y^{e} emperoure & kīges are but vayne names and shadowes" or that the "Emperoure and kynges are no thinge now a dayes but even hangmen vnto the Pope ād Bisshopes" would not have flattered Henry VIII given his exalted view of himself.[72] Beyond this, Tyndale makes the duty of the king to curtail the power of the clergy a binding responsibility on the fulfillment of which rests the fate of Henry's eternal soul. Tyndale declares, "Yff the office of princes geven them of God be to take vēgeaunce of evill doers: thā by this texte and Gods worde are all princes dāned even as many as geve libertie or licence vnto the spiritualtie to sinne vnpunesshed."[73] As if to drive the importance of

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the Reign of Henry the Fourth, and the Succeeding Monarchs, to the End of the reign of Henry Eighth (London: Printed by J. Johnson, 1809), 788].

[69] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. K6v.

[70] Ibid., sig. K6v.

[71] Ibid., sig. E1r.

[72] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. H4r–v, L8v. See also, Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. K6r.

[73] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. E2r. The text at this point is supplemented by a marginal note, "The dānaciō of princes," just in case the reader has missed the central message.

this point home, Tyndale returned to the topic in his summary of the work where he explains, "I proved also that no kynge hath power to graunte them [i.e. the clergy] soch libertie: but are as well dāned for their gevinge as they for their false purchasinge."[74] This is the note on which Tyndale chose to end the book and he makes it very clear how the king ought to use his authority, to curtail the unjustly gained and unjustly exercised power of the Catholic Church.

1. *Kings in the Temporal Regiment*

But what of the role of kings more generally? Here again the influence of the doctrine of the two regiments is clear. Throughout his writings Tyndale emphasized that the king's primary purpose was to maintain peace, security, and equity in the secular sphere. This is evident in his comments on Matthew 5:39 in two of his writings, one from the beginning and one from late in his literary career.[75] In his earliest published work, the Cologne fragment of the New Testament, Tyndale commented on this passage in a marginal note, "No man shuld avenge hyme silfe or seke wrecke no nott by the lawe: butt the ruler which hath the swearde shuld do such thynges of hym silfe."[76] He would develop this idea at much greater length when he returned to the Sermon on the Mount in his *Exposition upon Matthew V, VI, VII* issued in 1533. Here he distinguished clearly between "the Kyngedome of heauen which is the regiment of the Gospel. And the kyngdome of this worlde which is the temporall regiment."[77] As a member of the spiritual regiment, the individual is "a person for thyne awne sellfe, vnder Christ and his doctrine" and must not resist evil or seek revenge.[78] However, as a member of the external, temporal regiment, the individual has a duty to seek and preserve the welfare of others.[79]

This responsibility rests particularly with the monarch, to whom God has given a monopoly on violence, although the individual subject may be called upon to act in the king's name and under

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[74] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. V1r.
[75] "I say vnto you that ye with stond not wrōge."
[76] Tyndale, {*New Testament*} (Cologne, Peter Quentell, 1525), sig. D2r.
[77] Tyndale, *Exposition upon Matthew V–VII*, sig. g3r.
[78] Ibid., sig. g3v.
[79] Ibid., sig. g4r–v.

his authority.[80] Tyndale believed that mankind was naturally sinful, "borne vnder the power of the devill…ād leade at his will."[81] As such, any hope of social and political stability—the formation of a functioning community—rested on the king's exercise of his power to curtail the more extreme antisocial tendencies of humanity. This, at least, seems to have been Tyndale's interpretation of St. Paul's praise of temporal authority in Romans 13. Commenting on this passage in his *Introduction to Romans* in 1526, Tyndale explained that God had ordained secular rulers, "for the furderaunce off the commune welth to maynetene peace to puneshe the evyll and to defende the good."[82] Two years later in his *Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, Tyndale would repeat this view explaining, "the lordes & officers minister peace in y^{e} cōmune wealth punnysh murderers theves & evyll doers."[83]

Tyndale's comments on the role of kings in *Obedience of a Christian Man* follow this same line of thought. He begins his section on "The obedience of Subiectes vn to kynges princes and rulers" by quoting Romans 13. Here are verses one through five in Tyndale's rendering:

> Let every soule submit hī sylfe vnto the auctorite off the hyer powers. The powers y^{t} be are ordeyned off God. Whosoever therfore resisteth y^{e} power resisteth y^{e} ordinaūce of God. They y^{t} resist shall recea to thē silfe dānaciō. For ruelars are not to be feared for good workes but for evyll. Wilt thou be without feare of y^{e} power? Do well thē & so shalt thou be praysed off the same. For he is y^{e} minister off god for thy welth. But and yff thou do evyll then feare. For he beareth nott a swearde for nought. For he is the minister off God to take vengeaunce on thē that do evill…[84]

After noting the chaos that would result if everyone attempted to avenge personally the wrongs they had suffered, Tyndale argued that the duty to promote justice rested with the king. He then went on to explain why the coercive power of the king was so necessary in a passage that echoed his earlier statements on the subject; "for he is the

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[80] For the king's monopoly on violence, see Tyndale, *Exposition upon Matthew V–VII*, sig. g1v. For the delegation of that authority, consider the following statement a few pages later, "And so hath the ruler power ouer the, to sende the to vse violence vpon thy neyboure, to take him, to prison him and happlie to kill him to" (Ibid., sig. g5v).

[81] Tyndale, *That fayth the mother of good workes iustifieth us* {*Wicked Mammon*} (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1528), sig. A7r.

[82] Tyndale, *A Compendius Introduction*, sig. b8v.

[83] Tyndale, *Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, sig. F4v.

[84] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. D5r–v.

minister of God for thi welth: to defende the from a thousande inconveniences, from theves murderers and them that wolde defile thy wife thy daughter and take from the al that thou hast."[85]

It is worth noting that when Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans and encouraged obedience to secular authority, the rulers to whom he referred were the pagan emperors of Rome who would continue to persecute the church for several more centuries. Tyndale also had direct personal experience of persecution by the state. Nevertheless, he argued that even when the government was unjust or ungodly its authority must still be recognized. Indeed, it must still be considered an evident sign of God's concern for humanity's well-being. In Tyndale's words, "though he be the greatest tyraũte in the worlde yet is he vnto y^{e} a greate benefit of God…for it is better to have som what than to be cleane stripte out of all togeder…it is better to suffer one tyraunte thē mani."[86] In most cases, tyrants must be recognized as a form of just punishment for the wickedness of the people.[87] Yet even when a tyrant's actions were completely unjustified, the subject must follow the example of David, who refused to do violence to the evil King Saul because he was God's anointed one.[88] Indeed, Tyndale's statement that "He y^{t} iudgeth the kinge iudgeth God & he that layeth hādes on the kīge layeth hāde on God ād he that resisteth the kinge resisteth God" occurs in the context of his discussion of David and Saul.[89]

Although Tyndale certainly hoped that the king would also be a Christian who would seek to rule justly and to provide an example of godly living, he had little expectation that this would often be the case.[90] The Old Testament was full of examples of evil kings such as Saul and Ahab who had persecuted God's true servants.[91] The New Testament also warned believers of persecution and recorded how secular rulers,

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[85] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. E1v.

[86] Ibid., sig. E1v. Thomas Hobbes would come to a similar conclusion in his *Leviathan* (1651), although his argument took a different form. For further discussion, see Deborah Baumgold, "Pacifying Politics: Resistance, Violence, and Accountability in Seventeenth-Century Contract Theory," *Political Theory*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (1993): 6–27.

[87] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. B1v, F5r.

[88] Ibid., sig. D7r–8r.

[89] Ibid., sig. D8r.

[90] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. C5v, K6r; Tyndale, *Exposition upon Matthew V–VII*, sig. d5r.

[91] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. D7r–8r; Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. A5v.

"the blynde powers of y^{e} worlde," were easily manipulated by the enemies of the faith.[92] Later in *Obedience of a Christian Man*, he would point out that kings were sinful men just like their subjects; "With kynges for the most parte we have none accoyntaunce . . . They be also most comenly mercylesse. Moareover yf they promise they are yet men as vncōstante as are other people ād as vntrue.[93] While unfamiliar with the phrase "power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely," Tyndale certainly recognized the terrible temptation of kings to abuse their authority. It seems very likely that he would have agreed with Martin Luther's conclusion on the matter—"since the beginning of the world a wise prince is a mighty rare bird, and an upright prince even rarer."[94]

Fortunately, it was not necessary that secular rulers be Christians in order to fulfill their role, given the separation between the two regiments. Tyndale explained, "God therfore hath gevē lawes vnto all naciōs & in all lōdes hath put kīges governers ād rulers in his awne stede to rule the worlde thorow thē."[95] This was equally true in pagan and in Christian countries. Tyndale makes this clear a few lines later when he declares, "Soch obedience vnto . . . kīge lordes and rulers requireth God of all naciōs yee of y^{e} very turkes ād infidels."[96] In fact, at times Tyndale and the other reformers would use the example of well-ordered non-Christian kingdoms to shame their own European rulers.[97] As Robert Barnes said of the subject's obedience to the king, "Is not thys off the lawe of God: Stondeth yt not also wyth y^{e} lawe of nature? Yee doo not turkes and infidels faythefully obey to theryr prynces?"[98] Certainly, the Christian subject was specially bound to obey. But the recognition that such obedience was due did not require divine revelation. The need for obedience was also revealed through natural law to all people. In Tyndale's words, "they [are] vnder the testamente of the lawe naturall

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[92] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. A2v.
[93] Ibid., sig. P7v.
[94] Martin Luther, "Temporal Authority," 113.
[95] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. D6r.
[96] Ibid.
[97] "[T]he turkes ferre exceade vs christen men in worldly prosperite for their iust kepinge of their temporall lawes" (Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. D6v). Thomas More had anticipated the reformers in this a decade earlier by using Utopia, an imaginary well-ordered kingdom in the New World, to throw into sharp relief the shortcomings of Europe.
[98] Barnes, *Supplication unto Henry VIII*, sig. A7v.

which is the lawes of every londe made for the comen wealth there and for vnite that one maye lyve by a nother.[99]

2. *Kings in the Spiritual Regiment*

Tyndale's description of the ruler's responsibility in the secular sphere is certainly not unique. Ultimately, of course, it is based on his reading of the New Testament, particularly on his interpretation of Romans 13. He was also influenced by Luther, whose writings served as the basis for several of Tyndale's own works. In "Temporal Authority" (1523), Luther explained, "God has ordained two governments: the spiritual, by which the Holy Spirit produces Christians and righteous people under Christ; and the temporal, which restrains the un-Christian and wicked so that…they are obliged to keep still and to maintain outward peace."[100] On its own, the idea that the king was responsible for maintaining justice and order in society was not particular to evangelicals. Thomas More would have subscribed to this view.[101] It would also manifest itself in the writings of those who supported Henry's supremacy in the 1530s. For example, in his dedication to Henry VIII of his Latin-English *Dictionary* of 1538, Thomas Elyot spoke of kings as exercising "the cōmune distribution of Justyce: wherby the people vnder their gouernaunce, shulde be kepte and preserued in quiete lyfe, not exercysed in bestiall appetite."[102] All these writers, were echoing ideas about the responsibilities of kings with deep roots in both the Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman traditions.

What made Tyndale's views distinct was that in contrast to Catholic conservatives such as More and Fisher, Tyndale insisted the king's

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[99] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. G5r. He would say of natural law in his *Practice of Prelates* in another context, "the lawe of nature…pertayneth vnto all nacyons indifferentlye with all that dependeth or foloweth therof. This lawe was also before Moses [e.g. before the revelation of divine law through scripture]" (Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. H8v). For discussion of Luther's perspective on the role of natural law, see W.D.J. Cargill Thompson, *The Political Thought of Martin Luther* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1984), 80. Despite such references, Morris has argued that Protestants were not particularly interested in natural law (Morris, *Political Thought in England*, 43, 131). Based on my own reading of Tyndale and others, this evaluation may be in need of revision.

[100] Luther, "Temporal Authority," 91.

[101] Richard Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 247.

[102] Thomas Elyot, *The Dictionary of syr Thomas Eliot knyght* (London, Thomas Berthelet, 1538), sig. A2r.

power in the secular sphere was superior to that of the pope or the clergy. As such, the clergy were subject to the authority of the king's courts and their property must be available to support the king's purposes.[103] However, in contrast to most of his fellow English exiles in the 1530s and to the general tendency of subsequent thought among the magisterial reformers, Tyndale maintained a strict division between the two regiments. Having argued for a radical curtailment of the ecclesiastical hierarchy's power in the temporal regiment, he hesitated to allow kings a corresponding power in the spiritual regiment.[104] The fact that he seems to have been almost unique among the major reformers in this regard is probably why his persistent insistence on the separation of the two regiments has not been recognized by modern scholarship.

Although Tyndale's views on the king's role in the spiritual sphere are not necessarily as explicit as some of his statements on the nature of the ruler's authority in the temporal sphere, a careful reading of his entire corpus supports the conclusion that he envisioned the spiritual regiment as a non-hierarchical space radically different and distinct from the secular world. First, consider his comments on the relationship between individuals within the spiritual regiment. In the section of *Obedience of a Christian Man* entitled "The dutie of kynges and of the Judges ād officers," Tyndale reminded Henry VIII, "The most despised person in his realme is the kynges brother and felow mēbre with him and equall with him in the kindome of God and of Christe."[105] Later in the same work he declared, "In Christ there is nether father ner sonne: nether master ner servant: nether husbande ner wife: nether kynge ner subiecte…We are all the sonnes of God all Christes servauntes."[106] Again, these were sentiments that by themselves would

[103] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. D8v–E1r.

[104] Bruce Boehrer is one of the few historians to recognize this aspect of Tyndale's thought. He says of Tyndale's position, "Temporal and spiritual authority remain distinct; papacy is the encroachment of the latter upon the former, and tyranny the encroachment of the former upon the latter" [Bruce Boehrer, "Tyndale's *The Practyse of Prelates*: Reformation Doctrine and the Royal Supremacy," *Renaissance and Reformation*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (1986): 264.] However, Boehrer's insights have not usually been recognized or accepted. See, for example, Richard Duerden, "The Temporal and Spiritual Kingdoms: Tyndale's Doctrine and Practice," *Reformation*, Vol. 1 (1996): 118–128 (see note 1).

[105] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. G3v.

[106] Ibid., sig. Q3v–4r. In a similar vein, Tyndale had written earlier in the same work, "Father mother sonne doghter master servaunte kynge and subiecte be names in

have been acceptable to most sixteenth-century thinkers. For reformers who wished to see temporal authorities take a more active role in the affairs of the church, it was possible to maintain the view articulated above while simultaneously suggesting that the king's authority in the secular sphere could be used to further the cause of reform.[107]

However, Tyndale makes it clear that in his opinion the boundary between the two regiments was not so permeable. Bruce Boehrer's article on Tyndale's *Practice of Prelates* reveals a key point at which the English reformer would have parted ways with the advocates of the royal supremacy. Boehrer writes, "In principle it [royal supremacy] was merely another version of the papacy to which he was so fiercely opposed, for it sought to consolidate the coercive rule of the temporal and the admonitory rule of the spiritual under one head."[108] The backbone of the king's authority in the secular sphere was his monopoly on violence. But such coercive power had no place in the spiritual regiment. In Tyndale's words:

> Christes kingdom is all together spirituall and the bearynge of rule in it is cleane contrarye vnto the bearinge of rule temporallye. Wherfore none that beareth rule in it maye haue any tēporall iurisdictiō or ministre any temporall office that requyreth violence to compell with all.[109]

This statement in the opening pages of *Practice of Prelates* was directed primarily at the clergy, who had usurped coercive powers belonging to the state to impose their will on the laity. However, Tyndale's comment clearly cuts both ways.[110] The spiritual regiment was—sometimes

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the worldly regimēte. In Christe we are all one thīge none better thē other all brethern and must all seke Christe and oure brothers profit in Christe" (Ibid., sig. G1v).

[107] For example, when Martin Luther called for the Elector of Saxony to initiate church visitations in 1527–28, he was departing from his earlier position on the fundamental separation of the two regiments. However, Luther attempted to justify this new development by suggesting that the elector was acting merely as a Christian and not as a secular ruler, although "his secular office puts him in a specially favorable position to do so" (Thompson, *The Political Thought of Martin Luther*, 145–146). For discussion of late medieval precedents, refer to the chapter entitled "Fathers of the Land I: Late-Medieval Reform and Political Paternalism" in Robert Bast, *Honor Your Fathers: Catechisms and the Emergence of a Patriarchal Ideology in Germany, 1400–1600* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 146–185.

[108] Boehrer, "Tyndale's *The Practyse of Prelates*," 271.

[109] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. A8v. For more on the incompatibility of violence and the spiritual regiment, see *Practice of Prelates*, sig. A7v & C3v.

[110] For another example of a statement directed at the clergy but which clearly cut both ways, consider Tyndale's remark that "To preach Gods worde is to moch for half a mā. And to minister a tēporall kīgdome is to moch for half a mā also. Ether other

it helps to restate the obvious—the realm of the spirit, that is, both the internal realm of belief and, just as importantly, the realm where the Holy Spirit exercised its influence.[111] The secular world was governed by hierarchical forces. In contrast, "in the kingdome of Christ and in his churche or congregacion…the rular is the scripture approued thorow the miracles of the holy gost & men be servauntes only and Christ is the heede and we all brethren."[112]

Tyndale's view that the church in its distinctly religious functions should remain separate from the temporal regiment is also evident when one considers his ecclesiology. Chapter Two discussed the importance of the concept of the "congregation" in Tyndale's thought.[113] Although his development of an ecclesiology centered on the local congregation was not without internal tensions, he imagined a local church largely independent from the interference of either an ecclesiastical hierarchy or an intrusive king.[114] In *Obedience of a Christian Man*, Tyndale seems to suggest that it should be up to the local congregation to select their preacher—"I will therfore that where a congregation is gathered to gether in Christ one be chosen after the rule of Paul."[115] Similarly, in *Practice of Prelates* he granted control over the tithe and the minister's salary to prominent lay members of the community.[116] The king should prevent the clergy from usurping his coercive authority and must use that authority to punish sinners who threatened the peace of the community, but otherwise he had little role to play in the functioning of the church.

In his essay entitled "The Temporal and Spiritual Kingdoms: Tyndale's Doctrine and Practice," Richard Duerden has also noted Tyndale's tendency to erect "a separation between the temporal and

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requireth an hole man. One therfore can not well doo both" (Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. G7v).

[111] On the first point, consider Luther's remark in "Temporal Authority," "The temporal government has laws which extend no further than to life and property and external affairs on earth…Therefore, where the temporal authority presumes to prescribe laws for the soul, it encroaches upon God's government and only misleads and destroys them" (Luther, "Temporal Authority," 105).

[112] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. B2v.

[113] Tyndale, *New Testament* (1525), sig. A2r; Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. B4r–v; Tyndale, *An answere vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge made by Vvillyam Tindale* (Antwerp, Simon Cock, 1531), sig. A6r.

[114] For Tyndale's view of episcopacy, see Chapter Two.

[115] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. O8v.

[116] Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. K3r.

spiritual kingdoms."[117] However, Duerden eventually concludes that Tyndale did not consistently preserve this idea throughout his writings. He argues that there are several passages in Tyndale's works that suggest "that reform of clerical behaviour and even oversight of doctrine are princely functions."[118] As evidence for this view he refers to Tyndale's statement from the *Exposition upon Matthew V, VI, VII*, "dampnable is it for the spyrituall offycer, how hie so euer he be, to withdrawe him selfe from vnder the kynges correccyon, if he teache false or synne against anye tēporall lawe."[119] The latter point, that kings should punish the clergy when they violate the laws of the land, is clearly in keeping with the reading of Tyndale I have been developing. The only sticking point, therefore, is the phrase "if he teache false," which would seem to suggest the secular ruler's responsibility to determine correct doctrine. However, these comments by Tyndale are prefaced by the statement that he is concerned with those who "seke to put downe kynge and law and all together, and to make that it myght be lawfull to sinne vnpunysshed."[120] As such, the reference to false teaching is probably better understood as a reference to clerical claims to exemption from secular authority rather than to the doctrine of preachers.

A seemingly more difficult passage to reconcile with my thesis, although Duerden does not mention it, is Tyndale's discussion of Jesus' description of his followers as "the light of the world" earlier in his *Exposition unto Matthew V, VI, VII*:

> For all Kynges and all rulers are bounde to be salt and lyght not onlye in exsample of lyuynge, but also in teachynge of doctrine vnto theyr subiectes, as well as they be bounde to punyshe euell doers. Dothe not the scrypture testefye that Kynge Dauid was chosen to be a sheparde & to feade his people with Godes worde.[121]

Here Tyndale makes explicit reference to the king and to doctrine. However, a careful reading of the broader context for these comments demonstrates that Tyndale has not deviated from his general view on the relatively limited function of kings in the spiritual regiment. First,

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[117] Duerden, "The Temporal and Spiritual Kingdoms," *Reformation*, Vol. 1 (1996): 118–128.
[118] Ibid., 118–128.
[119] Tyndale, *Exposition unto Matthew V–VII*, sig. h1v.
[120] Ibid., sig. h1v.
[121] Ibid., sig. d5r.

the passage as a whole suggests that the true source of light is not the individual but rather scripture. He had declared on the previous page, "Christes gospel . . . is the light of the whole worlde and partayneth to all men . . . It is a madnesse that diuerse mē saye, the laye people maye not knowe it."[122] Tyndale's central point then is that the laity, including kings, should have access to scripture in the vernacular. In fact, the block quote above is immediately preceded by the words, "This lyght and salt partayned not then to the apostles and now to oure bysshopes ād spyritualtye onlye. No, it partayneth to the temporall men also."[123] The reference to David also provides an important clue to the king's responsibility. In addition to reading the Bible himself, the king should prove himself a shepherd to his people by providing them with the scriptures as well, something that Tyndale implored Henry VIII to do throughout his career.[124]

Further, Tyndale's comments on the subsequent pages of his *Exposition* also need to be considered. Almost immediately after his statement that "all kings and all rulers are bound to be salt and light," Tyndale extends this duty to all Christians, declaring that "euery pryuate man ought to be . . . both lyght and salt to his neyboure."[125] He explains that individual believers ought to be "as well lerned as the preacher" and to "stōde by Christes doctrine."[126] What begins as a statement that might appear to grant kings authority over the religious beliefs of their subjects becomes a defense of the individual's right to read scripture for him or her self and to stand on their own conscience. Indeed, Tyndale argues that even the humble Christian, guided by the Holy Spirit, can and must rebuke the king if he deviates from the teachings of the Bible. Just a few lines after describing the king as the shepherd of his people, Tyndale concluded:

> The Gospell hath a nother fredome withhir then the temporall regiment. Though euerye mannes bodye and goodes be vnder the kynge doo he

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[122] Tyndale, *Exposition unto Matthew V–VII*, sig. d4v.

[123] Ibid., sig. d5r. Tyndale's marginal notes on these pages further guide the reader to this interpretation of the text. One reads "The laye ought to haue the gospel," while a later note declares "Kinges ought to be lerned."

[124] Recall Tyndale's statements to Stephen Vaughn on this subject in 1531, discussed in the previous chapter [Robert Demaus, *William Tindale* (London: The Religious Tract Society of St. Paul's Churchyard, 1871), 346, 358].

[125] Tyndale, *Exposition unto Matthew V–VII*, sig. d5v.

[126] Ibid., sig. d5v.

> ryght or wronge, yet is the auctoryte of Godes worde fre and aboue the kynge: so that the worst in the realme maye tell the kynge, if he do him wronge, that he dothe nought and other wyse then God hath cōmaunded him, & so warne him to auoyde the wrath of God…Maye I then and ought also, to resist father and mother and all temporall power with Godes worde, whan they wrongfullye doo or cōmaunde."[127]

Although his other writings on the topic of obedience make it clear that he only authorized passive resistance, the preceding statement clearly undermines the idea that Tyndale's theology required, in J.J. Scarisbrick's formulation, "the undivided allegiance, body and soul," of subjects to their king.[128]

The final piece of evidence for the uniqueness of Tyndale's views on the limited role of the king in the spiritual regiment does not involve a positive statement on his part, but rather the complete absence of a common motif found in the writings of many of his contemporaries. When they sought to justify an active role for the king in the affairs of the church, both official royal polemicists and evangelical reformers would almost invariably refer to the reforming kings of the Old Testament. Just a few examples will serve to illustrate the point. In his *De vera obedientia* (1535), one of the most substantive defenses of the royal supremacy, Bishop Stephen Gardiner of Winchester appealed to the example of Solomon, who personally regulated the priests in the temple.[129] In the same year, Miles Coverdale would compare Henry to Josiah in the preface of his complete English Bible.[130] As the influence of Swiss reformers such as Heinrich Bullinger increased from

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[127] Tyndale, *Exposition unto Matthew V–VII*, sig. d5v–6r.

[128] Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 247.

[129] Stephen Gardiner, *De Vera Obedientia, An Oration made in Latine by the ryghte Reuerend father in God Setphan B. of VVinchestre* (London{?}, John Day, 1553), sig. E6r. I have quoted the English translation reprinted by John Day early in Mary's reign. By this time, Gardiner's passionate defense of the royal supremacy, which seemed to justify the Protestant reforms carried out in Edward VI's name, had become something of an embarrassment to the bishop. For a modern reproduction of Gardiner's work in both Latin and English, refer to Pierre Janelle, ed., *Obedience in Church & State: Three Political Tracts by Stephen Gardiner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930). See also Michael Riordan and Alec Ryrie, "Stephen Gardiner and the Making of a Protestant Villain," *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (2003): 1039–1063.

[130] Coverdale, *Biblia The Bible*, sig. ⋕3v.

the middle of the century, such references became staples of royal and reformed propaganda.[131]

As such, it is a striking fact not previously recognized by the existing historiography, that Tyndale does not pursue this line of thought or make a strong connection between the kings of his own day and the kings of the Old Testament. Consider the evidence from *Obedience of a Christian Man, Practice of Prelates*, and *Exposition unto Matthew V, VI, VII*, the three works in which he develops his ideas concerning the two regiments at greatest length. In the last of these three books, Tyndale does refer very generally to the "manye holye prophetes, prestes and kinges in the olde testamēt [who] did call the people backe ād brought thē agayne in tyme of aduersite, vnto the apoyntment of the lorde."[132] However, this must be paired with his later reference to how Israel's kings had frequently led the people into idolatry.[133] In these three works, Tyndale makes no reference to Josiah or Hezekiah, two of the most popular reforming kings.[134] He mentions Solomon only twice, in his discussion of Matthew 6:29 and 7:7–12.[135] In both cases, Tyndale refers to Solomon's wealth rather than to his association with the temple or with the religious life of the Jewish people.

King David would at first appear to be an exception to Tyndale's general lack of interest in Old Testament kings, for Tyndale refers to David quite frequently. However, a closer examination of these references reveals that Tyndale was not particularly interested in King David as a model of the reforming monarch. In fact, the only reference that approaches David in this vein is the passage we have already considered when Tyndale calls David the shepherd

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[131] On the Swiss influence on English political and religious thought, see Kirby, *The Zurich Connection and Tudor Political Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). For further discussion of the motif of Old Testament monarchy, refer to John King, *Tudor Royal Iconography: Literature and Art in an Age of Religious Crisis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Pamela Tudor-Craig, "Henry VIII and King David," in Daniel Williams, ed., *Early Tudor England* (Harlaxton Medieval Studies, O.S., 4), Woodbridge 1989, pp. 183–205.

[132] Tyndale, *Exposition unto Matthew V–VII*, sig. l3r–v.

[133] Ibid., sig. o8v.

[134] Coverdale, *Biblia The Bible*, sig. ⋕3v; "That Hezekiah and Josiah were vnto Israel, the same is youre grace vnto y^e^ Realme of England" [John Rogers, *The Byble, which is all the holy Scripture: in whych are contained the Olde and Newe Testament truly and purely translated into Englysh by Thomas Matthew* (Antwerp, Matthew Crom, 1537), sig. *6v].

[135] Tyndale, *Exposition unto Matthew V–VII*, sig. m4v–5r; n5v–6r.

of his people.[136] Otherwise, Tyndale's references to David fall into three general categories. First are those allusions to David that are merely passing examples to support some other point.[137] Second, Tyndale frequently mentions David's failings, such as his decision to take a census or his adultery with Bathsheba.[138] However, Tyndale refers to David most frequently in a third capacity, as an illustration of obedience to evil rulers. In the midst of his discussion of the obedience subjects owe to their kings in *Obedience of a Christian Man*, Tyndale devotes three pages to a discussion of David's recognition that "God hath made the kīge in every realme iudge over all ād over him is there no iudge."[139] Tyndale also returns to this story on several other occasions.[140]

Tyndale expressed little hope that secular rulers would be godly figures. As he observed in *Obedience* when he spoke of the possibility of kings being Christian, it "is selden sene and is an hard thinge verily though not impossible."[141] Tyndale seems to have found New Testament descriptions and predictions of kings and governors as persecutors of the faithful more consistent with his own experience than Old Testament stories of reforming kings. He returned again and again throughout his writings to Romans 13, where Paul commanded Christians to obey such rulers in the secular sphere but to focus their energies on the religious sphere, which was ruled by the law of love.[142] If anything, Tyndale found the example of the prophets who challenged evil rulers far more compelling than the few examples of godly kings.[143] It is difficult to speculate what would have happened

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[136] Tyndale, *Exposition unto Matthew V–VII*, sig. d5r. As I argued above, Tyndale was suggesting in this passage that the king ought to make scripture available to his people as David had done by producing the psalms.

[137] Examples would include his reference to Jesus as the seed of David (Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. E2r) or when he says that David's second psalm encourages judges to be learned (Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. K8v).

[138] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. F5r, R7v; Tyndale, *Exposition unto Matthew V–VII*, sig. f1v.

[139] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. D7r–D8r.

[140] Ibid., sig. A5v–6r; Tyndale, *Exposition unto Matthew V–VII*, sig. g8r.

[141] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. K7r.

[142] Tyndale, *A Compendius Introduction*, sig. b8v; Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. D5r–v; Tyndale, *Exposition unto Matthew V–VII*, sig. g5v.

[143] "God sens the beginnynge of the worlde…ever sente his true prophetes and preachers of his worde to warne the people" (Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. B3r). See also Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. A5v, and Torrance Kirby's discussion of what he calls the "prophetical office" (Kirby, *The Zurich Connection and Tudor Political Theology*, 26).

if Tyndale had lived to see the reign of Edward VI like some of the other early English reformers such as George Joye, Miles Coverdale, and Thomas Cranmer. Already from the mid 1530s, these men had adjusted their political theology to bring it more closely into line with the royal supremacy and Henry VIII's headship of the English church. Had he survived two more decades, Tyndale's views on the relationship between the two regiments might also have evolved. However, the evidence from his entire corpus does not support that conclusion.

III. *The Royal Supremacy and Henrician Propaganda in the 1530s*

Given the divergence between Tyndale's views on the relationship of the temporal and spiritual regiments and the views of many of his contemporaries outlined above, what was the relationship between Tyndale's writings, the political and religious developments in his homeland, and the propaganda campaign that accompanied the implementation of the royal supremacy in the 1530s? Attempts to answer this question have produced heated debates among historians of the period. J.J. Scarisbrick argued that Tyndale exercised an important early influence over the development of Henry's thought and policy, a view developed at greater length by Stephen Haas in his study of the origins of the Henrician concepts of obedience and royal absolutism.[144] More recently, however, Richard Rex has demonstrated that while Tyndale's works helped to justify the break with Rome, their use by Henry's regime "did not so much precipitate as follow the espousal of the royal supremacy."[145]

Such conflicting interpretations reflect the fact that the exact nature and meaning of the supremacy was hotly contested in the sixteenth century, both during and after the passage of the revolutionary legislation of the mid 1530s which brought it into being. Even the government's propaganda campaign, "a veritable flood of literature" supporting the regime's agenda and policies, revealed the complex and at times contradictory mixture of traditions and ideas that helped to

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[144] Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 247; Steven Haas, *Years Without a Policy?: Martin Luther's 'Christian Obedience' and the Theory of Royal Absolutism in the Propaganda of William Tyndale and Thomas Cromwell* (Ph. D. Dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1974).

[145] Rex, "Crisis of Obedience," 871.

shape England's new religious order.[146] Leaving aside for the moment the influence of exiled reformers such as Tyndale, Fish, and Barnes, the authors of official government propaganda represented a wide range of religious perspectives from the thinly-veiled Protestantism of William Marshall, who produced a translation of Marsilius of Padua's fourteenth-century treatise *Defensor pacis*, to the theologically conservative Richard Sampson, author of a learned Latin oration on obedience.[147] There were also enduring tensions between an ascending theory of royal authority influenced by the Marsilian tradition and advocated in the writings of Christopher St. German such as his *Answer to a Letter*, and a descending view that saw the king's authority as conferred directly by God, a position advanced in Stephen Gardiner's *De vera obedientia*.[148] As evidence that such various perspectives were flourishing simultaneously, consider that all four of the works just named were published in 1535.[149]

A year earlier, Thomas Swinnerton, one of the government's official polemicists, had attempted to explain recent events in England in his provocatively named *Treatise against the Mumbling of Papists in Corners*. Swinnerton attributed the discovery of papal corruption and the regime's decisive rejection of Rome's usurped authority to Henry VIII's vigilant concern for his people's spiritual welfare. He argued that had the king and his councilors "not by their diligent studie,

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[146] Franklin Le Van Baumer, *The Early Tudor Theory of Kingship* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), 35. A full discussion of this extensive body of writings is certainly beyond the scope of the current study. I will, however, examine several key texts and their connections with Tyndale's works. For more extensive analysis, refer to the secondary literature cited in the notes for this section.

[147] William Marshall, *The defence of the peace: lately translated out of laten in to englysshe* (London, Robert Wyer, 1535); Richard Sampson, *Oratio, qua docet, hortatur, admonet omnes potissimū anglos, regiae dignitati cum primis ut obediant* (London, Thomas Berthelet, 1535).

[148] Christopher Saint German, *An answere to a letter* (London, Thomas Godfray, 1535); Stephen Gardiner, *De vera obedientia* (London, Thomas Berthelet, 1535). For additional discussion of competing ascending and descending views of royal authority in both printed works and parliamentary statutes, see Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 392–398.

[149] Government propaganda also manifested itself in a wide variety of forms and genres. To quote Franklin Baumer's summary, "There were official declarations to startle the timid, translations to satisfy the pedants and historians, Latin works to influence the educated, legal treatises to interest the lawyers, tracts preaching the sinfulness of rebellion to bring the religious in line, scurrilous pamphlets to attract the salacious and sensational-minded, and even poems to lull those musically inclined into obedience" (Baumer, *Tudor Theory of Kingship*, 216).

sought out his false fraude, the popyshe forme shuld neuer haue ben knowen."[150] Swinnerton's writings from 1534 are interesting for two reasons. First, although he gives the glory for recognizing the corruption of the Catholic Church to Henry VIII, he repeats arguments and uses examples already developed and popularized in the earlier writings of Tyndale and his fellow reformers.[151] For example, Swinnerton complains that the pope and bishops "robbe and spoyle vs of oure welthe" and describes them as "the occasion and styrrers vppe of warre and stryffe in Christendome."[152] Tyndale had made both these accusations quite clearly in *Obedience of a Christian Man* six years before.[153] Even stronger evidence of Tyndale's possible influence on Swinnerton can be found in the latter's other work of 1534, *A mustre of scismatyke bysshoppes of Rome*. Here he attacked the so-called "worde of god vnwryten," which had been a central issue in Tyndale's exchanges with Thomas More.[154] Swinnerton also complained of the pope's mistreatment of good King John, another favorite example of Tyndale.[155]

The other fascinating thing to note about Swinnerton's writings of 1534 is the fact that, as Richard Rex has shown, they are among the clearest expressions of a new direction in official royal polemics dating back only to the Act in Restraint of Appeals of the previous year.[156] As Henry's frustration over his inability to get his first marriage annulled increased, his relationship with the pope progressively soured. Already by 1529, Henry had begun to sympathize with certain expressions of English anticlericalism, the cultivation of which could potentially be used as a tool in the king's struggle with the pope over

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[150] Swinnerton, *Treatise against the Mumbling of Papists in Corners*, sig. A8r–v.

[151] Contrast Swinnerton's praise of Henry as the clear-sighted savior of England with Tyndale's tendency to view the king as a pawn in the hand of ecclesiastical authorities (Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. H4r–v, L8v; Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. K6r).

[152] Swinnerton, *Treatise against the Mumbling of Papists in Corners*, sig. B7r–v.

[153] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. E6v–7r.

[154] Thomas Swinnerton, *A mustre of scismatyke bysshoppes of Rome otherwyse naming them selues popes* (London, Wynkyn de Worde, 1534{?}), sig. E1v–2r; Tyndale, *Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, sig. A6v; Tyndale, *Exposition upon Matthew V–VII*, sig. l6v. For additional discussion, see Peter Marshall, "The Debate over 'Unwritten Verities' in Early Reformation England," in Bruce Gordon, ed., *Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe, Vol. I: The Medieval Inheritance* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996).

[155] Swinnerton, *A mustre of scismatyke bysshoppes of Rome*, sig. E1v. Compare with Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. V5r–v; Fish, *Supplication of the Beggars*, fol. 3v.

[156] Rex, "Crisis of Obedience," 879–880.

his divorce.[157] However, while official polemics of the early 1530s, such as the *Determinations of the Universities* (1531) and the *Glass of Truth* (1532), argued that the pope was abusing his power, papal authority as such was not challenged.[158]

The relationship of the writings of Tyndale and his fellow reformers to the official government propaganda of this early period was often marked by tension. Thomas Cromwell, a rising star at court, was busy seeking potential allies for the king wherever they could be found. In 1531, Cromwell's agent Stephen Vaughn was active in the Low Countries gathering potentially useful new printed works by Continental writers and reaching out to the English reformers in exile. Cromwell also pursued other avenues of support for Henry's cause. The minister's encouragement was probably behind the praise of monarchy in the opening sections of Thomas Elyot's *The Boke named the Gouernour*, published in 1531, a work devoted to the proper education of rulers.[159] In the case of Tyndale and his friends, there were many obstacles to any sort of alliance at this time. In addition to espousing a multitude of doctrinal positions with which the king had no sympathy, Tyndale had also taken a firm stand against Henry VIII's arguments for the divorce in his *Practice of Prelates* in late 1530.[160] Although Robert Barnes did receive a safe-conduct in late 1531, the letter he brought from Martin Luther also rejected the king's case for a divorce.[161]

However, the fact that Tyndale was unwilling to endorse Henry's desire for a divorce does not mean that the reformer did not exert an important influence on the king's propaganda campaign. In the years before his fall from power, Cardinal Wolsey had consistently

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[157] Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 245. Henry's offer of a safe-conduct to Simon Fish in this period, discussed in the previous chapter, is one prominent example of this trend.

[158] Edward Fox, *The determinations of the moste famous and mooste excellent vniuersities of Italy and Fraunce* (London, Thomas Berthelet, 1531); Anonymous, *The glasse of the truthe* (London, Thomas Berthelet, 1532{?}).

[159] Stanford Lehmberg, *Sir Thomas Elyot: Tudor Humanist* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1960), 51. Lehmberg suggests that the main body of the book, the sections on health and education, were written first and that the introductory remarks, which focus on kingship rather than on governors more generally, were added later.

[160] Boehrer, "Tyndale's *The Practyse of Prelates*," 257–258.

[161] Interestingly, Guy Bedouelle has shown that when it came to the question of the divorce, "the results to which various authors came in 1530–31 cannot be classified according to confessional criteria" [Guy Bedouelle, "The Consultation of the Universities and Scholars Concerning the 'Great Matter' of King Henry VIII," in David Steinmetz, ed., *The Bible in the Sixteenth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 35].

argued that Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon was invalid due to a legal technicality. He pointed out that Julius II's bull of 1503 had dispensed from the impediment of affinity created by Catherine's earlier marriage to Prince Arthur but should actually have addressed the impediment of public honesty, since Catherine claimed the marriage had not been consummated.[162] However, from the beginning Henry insisted that far more was at stake. He argued that the pope's dispensation for his marriage had contravened divine law, the prohibition against marrying a brother's wife found in Leviticus 18:16 and 20:21, and that not even the pope could allow what God had forbidden.

As such, proper biblical exegesis became central to the resolution of Henry's "great matter." Bedouelle has pointed out that when the king's agents sought the opinions of English and Continental university faculties in 1529 and 1530, the scholars largely avoided detailed exegesis; "none of the 'determinations' proposed a precise analysis of the biblical texts that were under discussion."[163] However, when the determinations were printed in an English translation in November 1530, they were accompanied by a treatise that dealt with the relevant scriptural texts at great length. The prologue to the work acknowledged that there would be some who "wyll nat grounde and stablysshe ther beleue but euen vpon the foundacions and groundes of very truth . . . which they them selfe haue spyed and clerely perceyued, and nat vpon other mennes sentences and iudgementes."[164] This is an interesting statement. First, it could easily be read as an endorsement of the necessity of individuals reading and interpreting scripture for themselves.[165] Second, although Tyndale personally disagreed with Henry's interpretations of key passages from Leviticus and Deuteronomy, the publication of Tyndale's English translation of the Pentateuch in January 1530 made these scriptural texts available to a wider range of English readers.

One can also make the case that Tyndale directly contributed to the regime's decision to bring its arguments for the divorce before the English people. Tyndale had already presented his view of the issue in *Practice of Prelates*. There Tyndale had boldly written:

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[162] For further discussion of the complexities of canon law with regard to these issues, see Scarisbrick's detailed analysis (Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 180–197).

[163] Bedouelle, "The Consultation of the Universities," 27.

[164] Fox, *Determinations of the Universities*, sig. B5r.

[165] In reality, it was actually only the king's interpretation of scripture that mattered.

> If the kinges most noble grace will neades haue a nother wyfe, then let hī serch the lawes of god, whether it be lawfull…then let his grace put forth a litle treatyse in prynte and euen in the english tongue that all mē maye se it, for his excuse and the defence of his deade.[166]

Over the next few years Henry would essentially accept Tyndale's challenge, although he did not directly acknowledge it. The regime certainly judged that an English response was needed. The anonymously authored *Glass of Truth* of 1532, which Henry probably helped to write, advanced arguments for the divorce "taken of the scripture of god" and rejected the conclusions of "some few affectionate persones, whiche do or may endeuour to denye the same."[167] Although Henry and Tyndale were clearly at cross-purposes in the early 1530s—Vaughn's negotiations with the reformer in 1531 came to nothing—the actions and writings of both contributed to a growing public interest in the vernacular Bible and its authority.

It was only with the Act in Restraint of Appeals of 1533 that the government's propaganda campaign entered a new phase. Even then, the decision to actually break with Rome had not been made. Nevertheless, anti-papalism was quickly taken to the next level. Whereas earlier diplomatic correspondence, parliamentary legislation, and printed polemics had acknowledged the pope's headship of the church, he was now referred to simply as bishop of the see of Rome.[168] In 1534, a series of acts passed by the Reformation Parliament officially cast off papal authority and declared Henry supreme head of the English church. Swinnerton's works of that year aggressively attacked the usurpation of "papists." These developments brought the government and the English reformers closer together, at least on some issues. The possibility of a rapprochement between the two camps is revealed in the revisions Robert Barnes made to the 1534 edition of his *Supplication unto Henry VIII* and the fact that it was published in London from the press of John Byddell.

In particular, Richard Rex has argued that it was in this period that "Tyndale's works provided a ready-made and accessible ideology with which to buttress the transfer of obedience from the papacy to the

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[166] William Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. H7r.

[167] Anonymous, *Glass of Truth*, sig. A2r–v. Interestingly, this would include both William Tyndale and Thomas More.

[168] Rex, "Crisis of Obedience," 879.

monarchy."[169] Again, Henry remained extremely unsympathetic to most of Tyndale's theology. Nevertheless, the reformer's emphasis on obedience to divinely instituted secular rulers, particularly in *Obedience of a Christian Man*, could be quite useful. In his article "The Crisis of Obedience: God's Word and Henry's Reformation," Rex examines in detail the ways in which the Henrician regime co-opted certain elements of Tyndale's ideas on obedience in order to support the new religious and political situation in England. Perhaps the clearest example of how this was accomplished occurs in Stephen Gardiner's *De vera obedientia* of 1535.[170] There the Bishop of Winchester engaged in a subtle manipulation of vocabulary, emphasizing the concepts of *fides* and *Verbum dei*, but replacing the reformers' concept of justification by faith alone with an emphasis on works, the most important of which was obedience to the king.[171] The same year, Richard Sampson's *Oratio* expressed the idea even more succinctly when it declared, "Verbum Dei est, obedire Regi," e.g. the Word of God is to obey the king.[172]

These maneuvers by two of the king's more conservative polemicists represented a major departure from Tyndale's position on obedience and the position and role of secular authorities. The Henrician doctrine of obedience essentially retained Tyndale's more extreme statements about royal power—"he that resisteth the kinge resisteth God" and "y^{e} kinge is in this worlde without lawe & maye at his lust doo right or wronge and shall geve a comptes but to God only"—while jettisoning his insistence on a sharp distinction between the temporal and spiritual regiments.[173] This co-optive effort on the part of the government was so successful that it has even led modern scholars to misunderstand Tyndale's actual views on the fundamental separation of the two spheres. While they certainly did not agree with the king's position on justification, most of Tyndale's fellow reformers were ultimately willing to acquiesce to the headship of the church that the king had claimed for himself, hoping that Henry would eventually reveal himself as a new embodiment of the reforming monarchs of the Old

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[169] Rex, "Crisis of Obedience," 873.

[170] For more on Gardiner's background and the immediate context for this work, refer to Glyn Redworth, *In Defence of the Church Catholic: The Life of Stephen Gardiner* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

[171] Rex, "Crisis of Obedience," 886; Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation*, 18.

[172] "The Word of God is to obey the king" (Quoted by Rex, "Crisis of Obedience," 889).

[173] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. D7v–8r, D8v.

Testament.[174] In particular, they began a concerted campaign to use royal rhetoric concerning the 'Word of God' to bring about something of which Tyndale would have whole-heartedly approved, the royal sanctioning of an English Bible.[175] By the end of the decade their efforts would bear fruit with the publication of the Great Bible, which will be the subject of the following chapter.

[174] Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation*, 20–21.
[175] Rex, "Crisis of Obedience," 892–893.

CONCLUSION: TYNDALE'S ENDURING LEGACY

I. *The Great Bible Woodcut of 1539*

On September 5, 1538, Thomas Cromwell issued an injunction with profound implications for Henry VIII's new national church.[1] The injunction declared:

> Item, that ye shall prouide on thisside the feast of all sainctes next cummyng, one boke of the hole bible of the largest volume in english, and the same sett vpp in sum convenient place within the said churche that ye haue cure of where as your parishoners may most commodiously resorte to the same and reade yt.[2]

Cromwell's instructions referred to a version of scripture that would become known as the Great Bible, the first edition of which was even then being printed in Paris. Events would demonstrate that Cromwell's proposed timetable for the mass distribution of the vernacular Bible throughout the realm was overly optimistic. The team in Paris ran into difficulties and operations had to be moved to London.[3] It would be the spring of 1540 before a sufficient number of copies had been produced to fulfill the terms of the earlier injunction. Despite these initial difficulties, between 1539 and 1541 the Great Bible went through seven editions totaling perhaps 20,000 copies.[4]

Cromwell's injunction went on to command the clergy that they should "discorage no man prively or apertely from the reading or heryng of the said bible but shall expressely provoke stere and exhorte euery person to reade the same."[5] However, the first thing that any

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[1] For further discussion of the technical nature of the injunctions, which Cromwell was authorized to issue in his capacity as vicegerent, refer to G.R. Elton, *Policy and Police: The Enforcement of the Reformation in the Age of Thomas Cromwell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 247–254.

[2] Roger Merriman, *Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell, Vol. II: Letters from 1536, Notes, Index* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902), 152.

[3] David Daniell provides a concise account of the complex political and diplomatic context for this initial printing in *The Bible in English: Its History and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 200–203.

[4] Tatiana String, "Henry VIII's Illuminated 'Great Bible'," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 59 (1996): 319n10.

[5] Merriman, *Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell, Vol. II*, 152.

potential reader would have encountered upon opening the Great Bible was not the text of scripture itself but rather the book's title-page woodcut, produced by a member of the school of Holbein (Fig. 1). One scholar has said of this image, "There had never been such an important visual statement of Henry's Royal Supremacy."[6] As the following analysis of the image will show, this was certainly the case. Inscribed within the many details of this complex woodcut one finds the visible representation of the doctrine of obedience, a linking of the 'Word of God' and the supremacy, which Richard Rex argues was foundational to Henry's regime after the break with Rome in the mid 1530s.[7] To return to the phrase of Charles Taylor, the image was a ringing reaffirmation of traditional notions of "hierarchical complementarity."[8] However, careful consideration of the woodcut, the text it introduces, and the context in which it was produced also reveals the ambiguities of Henry's religious settlement and the enduring influence of William Tyndale and other early English reformers.

In the center of the woodcut is a block of text which reads:

> The Byble in Englyshe, that is to saye the content of all the holy scrypture, bothe of y^e^ olde and newe testament, truly translated after the veryte of the Hebrue and Greke textes, by y^e^ dylygent studye of dyuerse excellent learned men, expert in the forsayde tonges.
>
> Prynted by Rychard Grafton & Edward Whitchurch.
> Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum solum.[9]

Anyone familiar with the long history of efforts to produce an authorized vernacular Bible for England will immediately recognize the profound significance of an official version of "The Byble in Englyshe." As has already been noted in previous chapters, England was the only nation in Western Europe without a printed vernacular Bible by the

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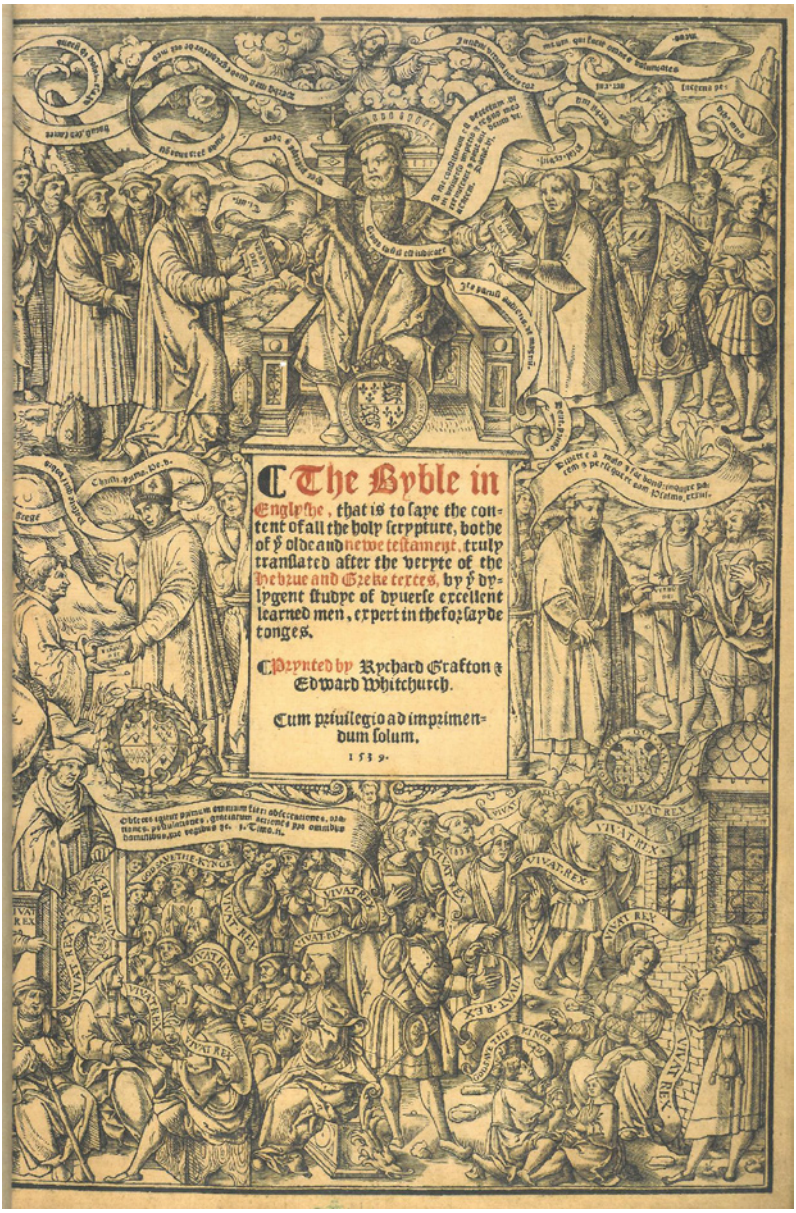
[6] String, "Henry VIII's Illuminated Great Bible," 319.

[7] Rex concludes, "The equation between the word of God and the supremacy was to become the hallmark of Henrician propaganda and preaching in the mid 1530s. Given the strong protestant resonances of the phrase 'word of God,' it is doubly important to understand that in the Henrician context it was…most closely related to obedience and the royal supremacy than to the Lutheran scriptural principle" [Richard Rex, "The Crisis of Obedience: God's Word and Henry's Reformation," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (1996): 889–890].

[8] Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 15–16.

[9] Miles Coverdale, *The byble in Englyshe, that is to saye the content of all the holy scrypture* (Paris, Regnault; London, Grafton and Whitchurch, 1539).


The Byble in
Englyshe, that is to saye the con-
tent of all the holy scrypture, both
of ỹ olde and newe testament, truly
translated after the verye of the
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lygent studye of dyuerse excellent
learned men, expert in the forsayde
tonges.
Prynted by Rychard Grafton &
Edward Whitchurch.
Cum priuilegio ad imprimen-
dum solum.
1539.
VIVAT REX
GOD SAVE THE KYNGE

Figure 1. Title-page woodcut of the 1539 Great Bible (British Library).

mid 1520s, a result of the anti-Lollard *Constitutions of Oxford* promulgated by Archbishop Arundel in 1409.[10] By the time Tyndale issued his first English New Testament from Worms in 1526, the situation was even less favorable because vernacular scriptures had become inextricably associated with heresy thanks to Luther's German translation several years earlier.[11]

In his *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* of 1529, More had acknowledged the possibility that an authorized English Bible might be translated by someone whose orthodoxy was not in doubt.[12] He even declared that among the prelates "som of y^{e} gretest and of the best of theyr own myndys [are] well inclynable therto all redy."[13] However, nothing would come of this suggestion that the English bishops produce their own translation.[14] The reformers certainly placed little faith in More's assurance that the church would eventually take steps of its own to make vernacular scriptures available to the people. Robert

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[10] For additional discussion, see Nicholas Watson, "Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel's Constitutions of 1409," *Speculum*, Vol. 70, No. 4 (1995): 822–864.

[11] Louis Schuster, "Thomas More's Polemical Career, 1523–1533," in Louis Schuster, Richard Marius, James Lusardi, and Richard Schoeck, eds., *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More, Vol. 8, Pt. III* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 1158. Indeed, one of the earliest references to Tyndale's translation, a report sent to Henry from Edward Lee from the Continent in December 1525, pulls all of these contextual elements together. Lee warned, "an englishman your subiect at the sollicitacion and instaunce of Luther, with whome he is, hathe translated the newe testament in to Englishe…I nede not to aduertise your grace, what infection and daunger maye ensue heerbie, if it bee not withstonded…All our forfaders gouenors of the chirche of England hathe with all diligence forbed & exchued publicacion of englishe bibles, as appereth in constitutions prouincall of the chirche of Englond" [Alfred Pollard, ed., *Records of the English Bible: The Documents Relating to the Translation and Publication of the Bible in English, 1525–1611* (London: Oxford University Press, 1911), 108–109.

[12] Thomas More, *A dyaloge of syr Thomas More knyghte…touchyng the pestilent secte of Luther & Tyndale* (London, John Rastell, 1529), sig. R3r.

[13] More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. R4v.

[14] Bishop Stokesley's response several years later in 1534 when asked to contribute to a bishops' Bible reveals the attitude of many conservative ecclesiastics. He is said to have declared, "I marvel what my lord of Canterbury meaneth that thus abuseth the people in giving them liberty to read the scriptures, which doth nothing else but infect them with heresies" (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 166). Cranmer would complain to Cromwell in a letter dated August 4, 1537, that the bishops would not be persuaded to produce an English Bible of their own "till a day after domesday" (Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, 215). Compare Stokesley's comments to Pope Paul V's later statement to the Venetian ambassador in 1606, "Do you not know that so much reading of Scripture ruins the Catholic religion?" [Quoted in Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided, 1490–1700* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 406].

Barnes wondered why the clergy were "reddy to cōdemne an other mans faithefulle labor ād diligence, but . . . had no cheryte to amend it."[15] Tyndale went further, complaining that "if no translation shalbe had vntill they geue licence or till they approue it, it shall neuer be had."[16] They were right to be skeptical, for More clearly believed personally that even an orthodox translation would be dangerous to laymen left to their own devices and he was even willing to imagine a church without any scriptures at all.[17]

The first evidence that an authorized English Bible might one day be granted came, not from More or the bishops, but from Henry VIII. In early May of 1530, the king summoned a commission of roughly thirty bishops and representatives of the universities to discuss heretical literature. By the end of the month, the commission had produced a document condemning works by Tyndale, Fish, and Frith, and outlining specific heresies found therein.[18] The royal proclamation issued on June 22, 1530, and publicizing the commission's work, also condemned the writings of the reformers and commanded that heretical books be turned over to authorities within fifteen days."[19] Then the proclamation turned to the issue of vernacular scripture. Henry's statement is fascinating and worth quoting at some length. He declared that after careful consideration he had concluded:

> . . . it is not necessary the said Scripture to be in the English tongue, and in the hands of the common people, but that the distribution of the said Scripture, and the permitting and denying thereof, dependeth only upon the discretion of the superiors, as they shall think it convenient. And that having respect to the malignity of this present time, with the inclination of the people to erroneous opinions, the translation of the New Testament and the Old into the vulgar tongue of English should rather

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[15] Robert Barnes, *A supplication made by Robert Barnes doctoure in diuinite, vnto the most excellent and redoubted prince kinge henrye the eyght* (Antwerp, Simon Cock, 1531), sig. N5r.

[16] William Tyndale, *An answere vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge made by Vvillyam Tindale* (Antwerp, Simon Cock, 1531), sig. N8r.

[17] More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. Q6v; Thomas More, *The cōfutacyon of Tyndales answere made by Thomas More knght lorde chaūcellor of Englonde* (London, William Rastell, 1532), sig. G1r.

[18] Steven Haas suggests that More was probably responsible for providing detailed summaries of the heretical contents of these books [Steven Haas, *Years Without a Policy?: Martin Luther's 'Christian Obedience' and the Theory of Royal Absolutism in the Propaganda of William Tyndale and Thomas Cromwell* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1974), 363–364.

[19] Hughes, *Royal Tudor Proclamations*, 194–195.

> be the occasion of continuance or increase of errors among the said people… Albeit if it shall hereafter appear to the King's highness that his said people do utterly abandon and forsake all perverse, erroneous, and seditious opinions, with the New Testament and the Old corruptly translated into the English tongue now being in print [i.e. Tyndale's translations]… his highness intendeth to provide that the Holy Scripture shall by great, learned, and Catholic persons [be] translated into the English tongue, if it shall then seem to his grace convenient so to be.[20]

Several elements of this proclamation merit emphasis.

First, it clearly indicates that by 1530 Henry already had an exalted view of his role as the leader of the English church and a strong sense of his responsibility for the spiritual well-being of his subjects. Second, Henry's proclamation echoes More's suggestion that the Bible might be translated by "som good catholyke and well lerned man, or by dyuerse dyuydynge the labours amonge theym."[21] More importantly in the present context, it also looks forward to the statement on the title page of the Great Bible that it had been translated by "dyuerse excellent learned men." Finally, the proclamation of June 1530 reaffirms the condemnation of Tyndale's translations, "the New Testament and the Old corruptly translated into the English tongue now being in print."[22]

The Great Bible title page does not identify the "excellent learned men" responsible for producing the vernacular text it introduces. Given Henry's denunciation of Tyndale and his translation at the beginning of the decade, one would probably be surprised to find that the Bible the king eventually permitted his people was largely the work of the English reformer, revised by his associate and friend Miles Coverdale. A quick survey of the events that intervened between the royal proclamation of 1530 and the issuing of the Great Bible in 1539 will reveal the fluctuations and ambiguities in the government's policy when it came to the English Bible, ambiguities hidden behind the famous woodcut.

In January 1530, approximately five months before Henry's proclamation, Tyndale issued from Antwerp his translation of the Pentateuch.

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[20] Hughes, *Royal Tudor Proclamations*, 196. Actually, Henry had made similar if less specific remarks several years earlier in the immediate aftermath of the introduction of Tyndale's New Testament [Henry VIII, *A copy of the letters wherin… Henry the eight kyng of Englande… made answere vnto a certayne letter of Martyn Luther* (London, Richard Pynson, 1528{?}), sig. A8v].

[21] More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. R3r. Marius argues that Henry was actually behind More's discussion of an authorized English Bible in 1529 (Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography*, 348–349).

[22] Hughes, *Royal Tudor Proclamations*, 196.

This was followed in 1531 by his English rendering of Jonah. Although he was not able to publish them during his lifetime, we know from Edward Hall's *Chronicle* that Tyndale had also translated most of the historical books of the Old Testament by the time of his arrest in May 1535.[23] On October 4, 1535, Miles Coverdale, who according to Foxe had assisted Tyndale with his Pentateuch, would issue the first complete printed English Bible from Antwerp.[24] Coverdale used those portions of scripture already published by his mentor Tyndale and supplemented them with his own renderings of the remaining books of the Old Testament based on recent Latin and German translations. This was a work intended to appeal to the king. Indeed, it contained a special address to "the most victorious Prynce and oure most gracyous soueraigne Lord, Kynge Henry the eyght…Defendour of the fayth, and vnder God the chefe and supreme heade of the Church of Englonde."[25] The title-page woodcut, which will be discussed further in a moment, shows Henry as a reforming king distributing the Word of God to his subjects (Fig. 2).

Despite Coverdale's initial effort, his 1535 Bible did not receive official recognition in England. However, another English Bible soon appeared on the scene. Printed initially by the Antwerp printer Matthew Crom, and later in London by Richard Grafton and Edward Whitchurch, it was the work of John Rogers, the chaplain of the English merchants' House in Antwerp where Tyndale spent his last nine months of freedom in 1534 and early 1535.[26] It was probably Rogers who was responsible for saving the manuscript copies of Tyndale's Old

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[23] "This man translated the New testament into Englishe and first put it in Prynt, and likewise he translated the v. bookes of Moses, Iosua, Iudium, Ruth, the bookes of the Kynges and the bookes of Paralipomenon, Nehemias or the first Esdras, the Prophet Ionas & no more of y^e^ holy scripture" [*Hall's Chronicle; Containing the History of England, During the Reign of Henry the Fourth, and the Succeeding Monarchs, to the End of the Reign of Henry the Eighth* (London: Printed by J. Johnson, 1809), 818.

[24] Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 178.

[25] Miles Coverdale, *Biblia The Bible, that is, the holy Scripture of the Olde and New Testament* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1535), sig. ⋕⋕2r. Coverdale's preface demonstrates that the reformers were well aware of the regime's new emphasis on the connection between obedience and the Word of God and that they believed they could use it to their advantage. Coverdale attacked the "blynde bysshoppe of Rome," acknowledged Henry as "chefe heade of all the cōgregacyon and church," and argued that in hiding scripture from the laity the clergy were "defraudynge all Christen kynges & prynces of theyr due obedience" (Ibid., sig. ⋕⋕2r–v).

[26] C.H. Williams, *William Tyndale* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1969), 48–50.

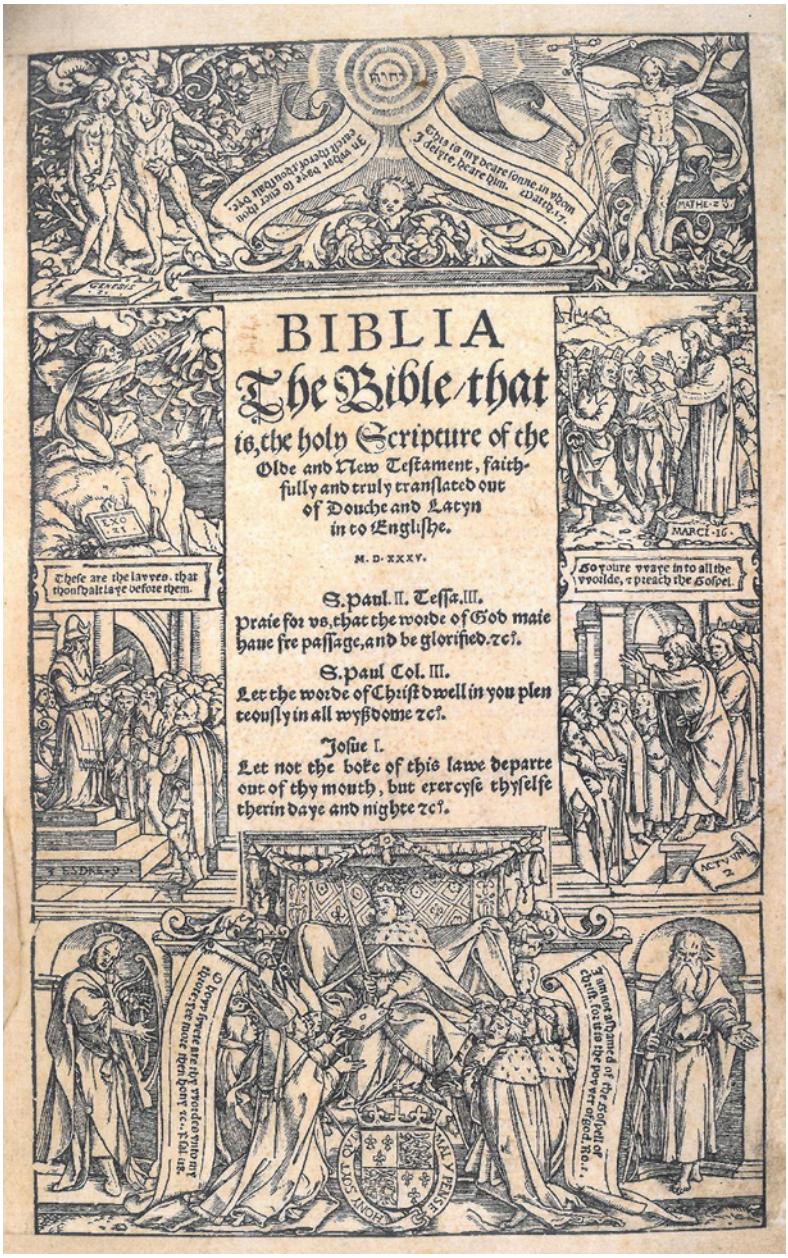
BIBLIA
The Bible/that
is,the holy Scripture of the
Olde and New Testament, faith-
fully and truly translated out
of Douche and Latyn
in to Englishe.
M.D.XXXV.
S.Paul. II. Tessa.III.
Praie for vs,that the worde of God maie
have fre passage,and be glorified.&c.
S.Paul Col. III.
Let the worde of Christ dwell in you plen
teously in all wysdome &c.
Josue I.
Let not the boke of this lawe departe
out of thy mouth, but exercyse thyselfe
therin daye and nighte &c.
These are the lawes. that
thou shalt laye before them.
Go youre weaye into all the
worlde, & preache the Gospel.
MARCI. 16.
ACTV. VIII.
HONY SOYT QVI MAL Y PENSE

Figure 2. Title-page woodcut of the 1535 Coverdale Bible (British Library).

Testament translations from Judges through 2 Chronicles. His edition, published under the false name Thomas Matthew (it became known as the "Matthew's Bible"), included all of Tyndale's surviving translations and rounded out the complete text with the work of Coverdale from two years earlier.[27] A copy of Roger's work, which was dedicated to Henry VIII, was quickly forwarded to Archbishop Cranmer by Grafton and Whitchurch.[28]

On August 4, Cranmer passed the copy on to Cromwell along with a letter declaring it "better than any other translacion hertofore made" and then continuing:

> And forasmoche as theboke is dedicated vnto the kinges grace, and also great paynes and labour taken in setting forth the same, I pray you my Lorde, that you woll exhibite the boke unto the kinges highnes; and to obteign of his Grace, if you can, a license that the same may be sold and redde of euery person, withoute danger of any acte, proclamacion, or ordinaunce hertofore graunted to the contrary.[29]

The archbishop wrote again on August 13 to thank Cromwell because the vicegerent had "obteigned of his grace, that the same shalbe alowed by his auctoritie to be bowght and redde within this realme."[30] Thus less than a year after Tyndale's execution outside Brussels in the fall of 1536, his translation work began to circulate with Henry's consent in England. Did Henry know that Matthew's Bible was in large part a reproduction of Tyndale's translation, which he had condemned in his proclamation of June 1530? Roland Worth suggests that Henry

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[27] During the medieval period, the concept of authorship did not often involve the same emphasis on originality with which it has become associated today. The ideas of intellectual property and of plagiarism have a complex history, but it can be argued that the impact of printing and of the market forces at work in the sixteenth-century book trade contributed to their development. For further discussion, see MacCulloch, *Reformation*, 73–74; Asa Briggs & Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003) 54–56. In 1534, William Tyndale condemned George Joye for making changes to the English New Testament and for "not put[ting] his awne name therto and call[ing] it rather his awne translacion," an odd sort of inverted plagiarism charge [William Tyndale, *The Newe Testament dylygently corrected and compared with the Greke by Willyam Tindale* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1534), sig. **4v].

[28] Grafton, a member of the Grocers' Company, and Whitchurch, a haberdasher, were both drawn into printing by the patronage of Thomas Cromwell [David Loades, *Politics, Censorship and the English Reformation* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1991), 113–114].

[29] Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, 214–215.

[30] Ibid., 216.

pretended not to know the origins of the work so that he could later use the pretext of having been deceived against either Cromwell or Cranmer.[31] On the basis of the existing evidence, it is impossible to say for certain.

Building on the success of 1537, Cromwell sent out a circular letter to the bishops early in 1538 encouraging them to urge priests to purchase English Bibles for their local parishes.[32] The conservative elements at court were certainly not without some remaining influence. A proclamation dated November 16, 1538, prohibited the importation of all English books printed abroad and forbade the production of new English books without the expressed consent of the king or members of his Privy Council.[33] However, with Cromwell behind it, the English Bible continued to gain ground.[34] It quickly became apparent that not enough copies of the Matthew's Bible had been produced so Cromwell began plans for yet another revision, the edition that would become known as the Great Bible. The revision itself would be produced by Miles Coverdale while the printing would be overseen by Richard Grafton and Edward Whitchurch.[35] However, the title page, as noted above, lists only the printers' names as Coverdale's association with Tyndale was presumably well known.

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[31] Roland Worth, *Church, Monarch and Bible in Sixteenth Century England: The Political Context of Biblical Translation* (London: McFarland & Company, 2000), 74.

[32] A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation, 2nd Ed.* (University Park: Penn State Press, 1991), 154.

[33] Hughes, *Royal Tudor Proclamations*, 271–272. This proclamation had unintended negative consequences for conservative works. For example, it prevented the importation of important liturgical texts often printed abroad and containing English rubrics. The act cut sharply into the business of the Parisian printer Francois Regnault, Grafton's and Whitchurch's collaborator in early efforts to print the Great Bible [Richard Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation, 2nd Ed.* (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 93].

[34] The authenticity of Cromwell's evangelicalism has frequently been questioned by modern historians. One prominent early biographer declared, "He stood completely outside the great religious movement of his time, and only made use of it to further his own political ends" (Merriman, *Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell, Vol. I*, 305). Other scholars have argued that Cromwell was personally and genuinely committed to the cause of reform [G.W. Bernard, *The King's Reformation: Henry VIII and the Remaking of the English Church* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 513–514]. Whatever his personal beliefs may have been, Cromwell certainly proved a committed and aggressive advocate for the English Bible.

[35] Foxe provides an account of the printing of the Great Bible in the 1583 edition of his *Acts and Monuments* [John Foxe, *Acts and monuments of matters most speciall and memorable* (London, John Day, 1583), 1191]. For additional correspondence relating to its production, see Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, 232–240, 243–249.

Two final remarks concerning the central block of text on the title page remain to be made. First, it declares that the translation has been produced "after the veryte of the Hebrue and Greke textes, by ye dylygent studye of dyuerse excellent learned men, expert in the forsayde tonges." This is really only the case for those portions earlier translated by Tyndale. Coverdale had openly acknowledged in the preface to his 1535 Bible that he had little skill in the original biblical languages.[36] It would not be until 1560, with the production of the Geneva Bible, that an English Bible based entirely on the Hebrew and Greek original would be available. Second, the Great Bible title page bears the Latin inscription "Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum solum." These words demonstrated its official status in keeping with a royal proclamation of November 1538, which clarified the process for obtaining a royal license and correcting abuses in the previous system.[37] Interestingly, the Great Bible was the only Bible ever officially authorized by the English government. There is no evidence that the more famous "King James Bible" of 1611, often called the "Authorized Version," was ever actually authorized by the king, by Parliament, or by Convocation.[38]

Having discussed the central text block of the title page, let us now turn to its more visual elements. The woodcut is densely populated, but the most prominent person by far is Henry VIII, seated on a large throne located above the central block of text.[39] In his discussion of the image, David Daniell has ironically noted that God, who is depicted "blessing the moment in history," is "forced to crouch under the top border by the bulk of King Henry VIII."[40] A clear contrast can be drawn with the title-page woodcut of the Coverdale Bible from 1535. This image, by Hans Holbein the Younger, also includes a picture of Henry VIII on his throne. However, in the 1535 woodcut the king is at the bottom of the image while God's Shekinah glory is given pride of place at the top of the page. In both images, Henry is flanked by representatives of the ecclesiastical and political hierarchies, the former on the king's right and the latter on his left. In the Great Bible

[36] Coverdale, *Biblia The Bible*, sig. ⋕4v.

[37] Hughes, *Royal Tudor Proclamations*, 271–272; Loades, *Politics, Censorship and the English Reformation*, 100–101.

[38] Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 204.

[39] I count fifty-eight individual figures/faces including God, Henry, Cranmer, Cromwell, bishops, nobles, and a crowd of approximately thirty-four commoners at the bottom of the image.

[40] Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 205.

image one can clearly identify his Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, and his chief minister, Thomas Cromwell. Henry hands a copy of scripture to each man.[41]

In this top section of the image, both Cranmer and Cromwell are bare-headed, presumably to show respect to their sovereign. Further down the page, on either side of the central block of text, both men reappear, this time as figures of authority with mitre and cap respectively. At their feet are copies of their official coats of arms, although editions produced after Cromwell's fall in 1540 include an empty circle where the former Lord Privy Seal's arms have been removed.[42] The two men, in turn, pass on copies of the Bible to others, Cranmer to a priest and Cromwell to a nobleman. Through the use of banderoles, Cranmer is made to quote 1 Peter 5:2, "Feed the flock of Christ which is among you," while Cromwell quotes Psalms 34:14, "Turn from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it." In the bottom third of the woodcut, one sees a crowd of ordinary citizens bracketed by a priest in a pulpit on the left and the walls of a prison on the right. Henry's loyal subjects proclaim, "Long live the king." Here we have a clear visual representation of England's religious and political hierarchies with Henry VIII firmly ensconced above them.

However, at this point it is worth noting two peculiarities about the scene depicted in the woodcut. The first is that despite the prominent reference to the "Bible in English" and the vernacular translation of scripture that the image introduces, the Bible that Henry is distributing is apparently not in English. Instead, it is labeled "Verbum Dei." In addition, all of the quotations from scripture, both those attributed to Cranmer and Cromwell, and many others scattered across the page are in Latin.[43] Second, although Henry passes the Bible to his ministers and they pass it on to others, by the time the observer reaches the

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[41] Dale Hoak has observed the "inversion of the conventional 'movement' of the dedication portrait, in which a patron characteristically receives a presentation copy of a manuscript or book from its author or translator. Henry VIII's posture in the Great Bible woodcut therefore combines that of both artist and patron as he assumes the quasi-authorial role of transmitting *Verbum Dei* ('the Word of God')" [Dale Hoak, ed., *Tudor Political Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 108].

[42] Tatiana String notes that in a special presentation copy produced for Henry VIII after Cromwell's fall, the two figures of Cromwell on the woodcut have also been altered by the addition of a beard (String, "Henry VIII's Great Bible," 323).

[43] In fact, the only English outside of the central block of text are a few scrolls reading "God save the king," the voices of either children or the very humble who know no Latin.

bottom of the image the book has completely disappeared. Even the priest standing at the pulpit in the bottom left-hand corner appears to be preaching from memory, without a Bible in sight.[44]

Again, there is an interesting comparison with the title page of Coverdale's Bible. This earlier frontispiece contains a wide range of images but almost all of them are about God speaking directly to individuals or about his word being read or spoken to the people. In panels on the left, God gives Moses the Ten Commandments and Ezra reads the law to the Jews who have recently returned from exile. On the right, Jesus gives his followers the Great Commission and Peter preaches at Pentecost. The title page also has three verses (2 Thessalonians 3:1, Colossians 3:16, and Joshua 1:8) printed prominently in English below the title. Respectively, these read: "Praie for vs, that the worde of God maie haue fre passage, and be glorified;" "Let the worde of Christ dwell in you plenteously in all wysdome;" and "Let not the boke of this lawe departe out of thy mouth, but exercyse thyselfe therin daye and nighte." These pictures and statements provide the context for interpreting the depiction of the king distributing the Bible to his subjects at the bottom of the page.

The Great Bible woodcut conveys a very different message. As Richard Rex has observed in his discussion of the topic, "Henry had no intention of promoting Protestantism, and conceded neither the Protestant 'scripture principle' [i.e. *sola scriptura*] nor the necessity of Bible-reading for the laity."[45] This is in keeping with the general consensus of historians of the period that Henry was doctrinally conservative and that it was independence from Rome rather than theological change that interested him. The woodcut effectively conveys England's new ecclesiological situation in the later 1530s. Most obviously, there is no reference to the pope and no place left for him in either the hierarchical order connecting God and the common people or in the spatial realm of this imagined England. More subtly, Tatiana String points out that in the illuminated version of the image one of the prisoners in the jail in the lower right-hand corner of the image is wearing a red hat—perhaps a cardinal's cap—and that those imprisoned may in fact be papists.[46]

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[44] David Daniell points out both of these fascinating aspects of the woodcut in his discussion of the image (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 206).

[45] Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation, 2nd Ed.*, 106.

[46] String, "Henry VIII's Great Bible," 320.

Also, despite Cromwell's injunction that the clergy should "discorage no man prively or apertely from the reading or heryng of the said bible but shall expressely provoke stere and exhorte euery person to reade the same," there is nothing in the title-page woodcut to indicate that the average English man or woman is being granted the freedom to read scripture for themselves.[47] Indeed, despite the seemingly apparent and significant shift in government policy during the 1530s described above, there is nothing in the woodcut at odds with Henry's position as expressed in the royal proclamation of June 1530:

> …it is not necessary the said Scripture to be in the English tongue, and in the hands of the common people, but that the distribution of the said Scripture, and the permitting and denying thereof, dependeth only upon the discretion of the superiors, as they shall think it convenient.[48]

Henry's recognition that a 'convenient' time had come to authorize an English Bible was tied to a definite agenda, the inculcation of the doctrine of obedience in his subjects. To quote Richard Rex again, "By publishing the Bible and disseminating the word of God in a language people could understand, he [Henry] hoped to spread knowledge of the moral law, especially the law of obedience to princes, and of the divine sanction for the moral and political order."[49]

The biblical passages included in the image (in contrast to those on the Coverdale title page) make this emphasis clear. As Henry hands the Bible to Cranmer and Cromwell, he quotes Daniel 6:26, "A me constitutum est decretum ut in universo imperio et regno meo, tremiscant et paveant Deum viventem."[50] Although this is a message that the reformers would certainly have endorsed, it is worth noting that the Bible places these words in the mouth of the oriental despot and pagan, King Darius. Henry instructs Cranmer by quoting 1 Timothy 4:11, "Hec precipe & doce."[51] David Daniell comments, "the biblical context is of the maintenance of social order, and the archbishop is bidden 'command' before 'preach'; he is to have no doubt of his function in the state."[52] Most telling of all, however, is the scriptural exhortation

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[47] Merriman, *Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell, Vol. II*, 152.
[48] Hughes, *Royal Tudor Proclamations*, 196.
[49] Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation, 2nd Ed.*, 84.
[50] "My command is that in all my dominion and kingdom, men fear and stand in awe of the living God."
[51] "Such things command and preach."
[52] Daniell, *Bible in English*, 206.

of the preacher to the crowd at the bottom of the image, taken from 1 Timothy 2:1–2, "Obsecro igitur primum omnium fieri obsecrationes, orationes, postulationes, gratiarum actiones pro omnibus hominibus; pro regibus, &c."[53] In this particular case, the "etc." is important, for the full passage commands obedience to all who are in authority, a statement that could also be used by those defending the traditional power of the pope.[54] Equally important is the fact that the preacher is not proclaiming the "gospel" of the reformers.

Despite this conscious avoidance of protestant theology, the woodcut still draws on protestant iconography, particularly the association of the monarch with Old Testament figures.[55] Above Henry's head, God proclaims the words of Acts 13:22, "Inveni virum iuxta cor meum, qui faciet omnes voluntates meas."[56] Henry is assuming the mantle of King David, who felled the giant Goliath (the pope) and who received God's promise that his descendants would always sit on the throne of Israel (dynastic succession having been at the root of Henry's "great matter"). David was also an example of sacral kingship. Such associations would become a hallmark of Tudor royal propaganda.[57] Such comparisons had already been made in the prefaces of Coverdale's Bible (1535) and Matthew's Bible (1537).[58] In the preface of a 1538 treatise dedicated to Henry VIII, the Zurich reformer Heinrich Bullinger likewise encouraged Henry to imitate the kings of ancient Israel and then argued, "First and above all it belongs to the ruler to look after religion and faith."[59]

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[53] "I exhort therefore that above all else prayers, supplications, intercessions and giving of thanks, be made for all men, for kings…"

[54] String, "Henry VIII's Great Bible," 320.

[55] This is the visual equivalent of the king's adaptation of ideas drawn from the writings of reformers to support and justify the break from Rome and the establishment of the royal supremacy discussed in the previous chapter.

[56] "I have found a man after my own heart, which shall fulfill all my will."

[57] For more extensive discussion, refer to John King, *Tudor Royal Iconography: Literature and Art in an Age of Religious Crisis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

[58] Coverdale, *Biblia The Bible*, sig. ⋕3v; "That Hezekiah and Josiah were vnto Israel, the same is youre grace vnto y^{e} Realme of England" [John Rogers, *The Byble, which is all the holy Scripture: in whych are contained the Olde and Newe Testament truly and purely translated into Englysh by Thomas Matthew* (Antwerp, Matthew Crom, 1537), sig. *6v].

[59] Torrance Kirby, *The Zurich Connection and Tudor Political Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 27. In the last chapter, I discussed the fact that Tyndale never seemed comfortable with this portrayal of kings as leaders of the church and architects of reform. A passage in his *Obedience of a Christian Man* seems to equate Henry VIII

II. *Cranmer's Great Bible Preface*

The year 1540 would witness a marked change in the fortunes of the English reformers. The previous June, the conservatives led by the Duke of Norfolk, Stephen Gardiner, and Cuthbert Tunstal had demonstrated their increasing influence with Henry VIII through the passage of the Act of Six Articles. Cromwell's position was further undermined by the disaster of Henry's fourth marriage to Anne of Cleves, the apparently dull and homely sister of a Lutheran German prince.[60] The Lord Privy Seal was arrested in January 1540 and his patronage of reformers came to an abrupt end. Indeed, the charges against him included the accusation that he had defended heretics. Robert Barnes, who had been serving as a go-between with the German Lutherans since 1534 and who was also involved in arrangements for the Cleves marriage, was mentioned specifically by name.[61] Cromwell was beheaded on July 28 and Barnes went to the stake two days later on July 30. More fortunate reformers such as Miles Coverdale and George Joye went back into exile on the Continent for the remainder of Henry's reign.

Nevertheless, new editions of the Great Bible continued to be produced with large print runs in the years immediately following Cromwell's fall.[62] Less than a year after his former minister's death, Henry issued a royal proclamation on May 6, 1541, reaffirming Cromwell's injunction from three years earlier that "in all and singular parish churches there should be provided…Bibles containing the Old and New Testament in the English tongue, to be fixed and set openly in every of the said parish churches."[63] Although they no longer felt nearly as secure, some reform-minded individuals remained

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more closely with evil King Saul than with good King David (Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. A5v–6r). It should be noted that the idea that the ruler or magistrate bore responsibility for the spiritual welfare of his people certainly predated the Reformation. For further discussion of the concept of the *Landesvater*, see Robert Bast, *Honor Your Fathers: Catechisms and the Emergence of a Patriarchal Ideology in Germany, 1400–1600* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), particularly Chapter 4.

[60] For more on Anne's unfortunate marriage to Henry, refer to Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 368–375.

[61] James Lusardi, "The Career of Robert Barnes," in Louis Schuster, Richard Marius, James Lusardi, and Richard Schoeck, eds., *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More, Vol. 8, Pt. III* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 1412.

[62] As noted above, the title-page woodcut was altered to remove Cromwell's coat of arms in editions produced after his fall from power.

[63] Hughes, *Royal Tudor Proclamations*, 297.

in positions of power. The most prominent by far was Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, who contributed a new "prologue or preface" to the edition of the Great Bible printed in 1540.[64]

Cranmer's prefatory remarks and their relationship to the message conveyed by the Great Bible title page reveal that the views of the reformers endured despite the conservative reaction in the final years of Henry's reign. Indeed, the preface demonstrates the complex, and at times untenable fusion of top down and authoritarian ideas at the heart of the royal supremacy with bottom up egalitarian ideas drawn from the evangelical thought of Tyndale and other exiled reformers.[65] On one hand, Cranmer stressed the Christian duty of obedience to kings and the association of the Word of God with that theme. He notes, "Herin maye prynces learne howe to gouerne their subiectes: Subiectes obediēce, loue and dreade to theyr prynces."[66] Cranmer also warns against abuses of the privilege of reading scripture. Quoting the words of the fourth-century Archbishop of Constantinople, Gregory Nazianzus, Cranmer declared, "It is not fitte (sayth he) for euery mā to dispute y^{e} hygh questions of diuinite, nether is it to be done at all tymes: nether in euery audiēce must we discuse euery doubte," particularly not in "euery market place, euery alehouse and tauerne, euery feasthouse."[67] This last phrase clearly recalls Henry VIII's proclamation of November 16, 1538, condemning those who disputed religious issues "in open places, taverns, and alehouses."[68]

Yet in addition to such admonitions to obedience and order, there is much in Cranmer's preface clearly at odds with the king's view of the rather restricted place of vernacular scripture within his new

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[64] Recall George Joye's comment in 1533, "he [i.e. Cranmer] is in a perellose place but yet in a gloriose place to plant the gospell" [Charles Butterworth and Allen Chester, *George Joye, 1495?–1553: A Chapter in the History of the English Bible and the English Reformation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962), 96].

[65] Timothy Rosendale argues quite persuasively that the four hundred year old stalemate between bottom up and top down interpretations of the English Reformation is a product of this dual legacy [Timothy Rosendale, "'Fiery tongues': Language, Liturgy, and the Paradox of the English Reformation," *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 4, Pt. I (2001), 1142]. For further discussion of this historiographical divide, see Christopher Haigh's classic essay, "The Recent Historiography of the English Reformation," *Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (1982): 995–1007.

[66] Cranmer (preface), *The Byble in Englyshe, that is to saye the contēt of al the holy scrypture, both of y^{e} olde, and newe testamēt* (London, Edward Whitchurch, 1540), sig. ⋕2r.

[67] Cranmer, *The Byble in Englyshe* (1540), sig. ⋕2v.

[68] Hughes, *Royal Tudor Proclamations*, 271.

state church. Like Coverdale in his biblical preface five years earlier, Cranmer sought to use Henry VIII's authority as supreme head to further an evangelical agenda. Against those conservatives who "refuse to reade, or to heare redde the scripture in theyr vulgar tonges" he wields the necessity of obedience—"the kynges hyghnes beynge supreme hede nexte vnder Christe of thys churche of Englande hath, approued with his royall assente the settinge furthe herof, which onely to all true and obedient suiectes ought to be a sufficiente reason."[69] However, Cranmer goes further arguing that there were strong historical precedents for an English Bible. He declared, "for it is not moche aboue one hundreth yeare agoo, sens scripture hath not bene accustomed to be redde in the vulgar tongue within this realme."[70] William Tyndale had made a very similar argument more than a decade before in his *Obedience of a Christian Man* and was also probably the editor of a reissued fourteenth-century text defending vernacular Bibles.[71]

Cranmer's preface also argued unreservedly that the Bible in English was appropriate for all classes of English society. He proclaimed:

> Here maye all maner of persons, men, wemen, yonge, olde, learned, vnlerned, ryche, poore, prestes, laymen, Lordes, Ladyes, officers, tenauntes, and meane men, virgins, wyfes, wedowes, lawers, marchauntes, artificers, husbande men, and almoner of persons of what estate or condityon soeuer they be, maye in thys booke learne all thynges what they ought to beleue, what they oughtto do, & what they shulde not do, aswell concerning almyghtye God as also concernynge them selues and all other.[72]

A modern commentator rightly observes, "Cranmer's expansive portrayal of a realm of religious subjects is almost breathtaking in its inclusivity…it traverses English society from top to bottom along nearly every conceivable axis of class, gender, and profession."[73] Thomas More

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[69] Cranmer, *The Byble in Englyshe* (1540), sig. ⋕1r, 2v. In his monumental work *Policy and Police: The Enforcement of the Reformation in the Age of Thomas Cromwell*, G.R. Elton demonstrates through numerous examples that "The Bible in English provided one of the conservatives' main targets, especially but not only after its reading had been ordered by the Injunctions of 1538" (Elton, *Policy and Police*, 25).

[70] Cranmer, *The Byble in Englyshe* (1540), sig. ⋕1r.

[71] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. B7v; *The prayer and complaynt of the Ploweman vnto Christ: writtē nat longe after the yere of our Lorde. M. thre hūdred* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1531) opens with a preface entitled "W. T. to the reder" (sig. A2r).

[72] Cranmer, *The Byble in Englyshe* (1540), sig. ⋕2r–v.

[73] Rosendale, "Language, Liturgy, and the Paradox of the English Reformation," 1155.

had argued that many sections of the Bible were so difficult to understand that if humble laymen and laywomen were given access, scripture would not "agree wyth theyr capacytees."[74] Cranmer took a position much closer to that of Tyndale, suggesting, "the holy ghost hath so ordered and attempered the scriptures, that in them aswell publicanes, fyshers, and shephereds maye fynde theyr edyficacion, as greate doctoures theyr erudition."[75] Cranmer concludes, "yf it were possyble so to lyue, I woulde thynke it good for a man to spende all hys lyfe in that [i.e. reading scripture], and to do no other thynge."[76]

In authorizing the production and distribution of the English Bible, Henry had opened the door to public religious discourse and, despite his intentions to the contrary, had "implicitly enfranchised the evangelical subject, conferring religious authority and discretion upon individuals rather than the institutional church."[77] In Cranmer's preface, this enfranchisement is made explicit. Yet even setting Cranmer's preface aside, the Great Bible still has at its heart a paradox; in Claire McEachern's words, that "a state seeking to secure a universal compliance with its hierarchical imperatives" would do so "through the medium of a common language diversely disseminated."[78] The Great Bible woodcut imagines an ideally ordered (from Henry's perspective) English society, where the reins of power remain firmly in the monarch's hands and the Word of God serves to buttress that order. Perhaps this is why the image does not actually depict the masses as readers, for as Roger Chartier has argued, "reading, by definition, is rebellious and vagabond. Readers use infinite numbers of subterfuges . . . to read between the lines, and to subvert the lessons imposed upon them."[79]

It did not take the king long to recognize the danger. Indeed, a draft for a royal proclamation from the spring of 1538, which was intended to control the reading and exposition of scripture, contains corrections

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[74] More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, sig. Q6v.
[75] Cranmer, *The Byble in Englyshe* (1540), sig. ⋕1v.
[76] Ibid., sig. ⋕3r.
[77] Rosendale, "Language, Liturgy, and the Paradox of the English Reformation," 1162.
[78] Claire McEachern, *The Poetics of English Nationhood, 1590–1612* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, 32) [quoted in Rosendale, "Language, Liturgy, and the Paradox of the English Reformation," 1162].
[79] Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, trans. Lydia Cochrane (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), viii.

in Henry's own hand regarding the fact that people were using the Bible the king had allowed them:

> much contrary to his highness' expectation; for his majesty's intent and hope was that they that would read the Scripture, would with meekness and wish to accomplish the effect of, read it, and not to maintain erroneous opinions and preach, not for to use the reading or preaching of it in sundry times and places.[80]

The conservative reaction after Cromwell's fall produced further efforts to curtail access to scripture, both regarding who could read the English Bible and under what conditions. In 1542, Bishop Edmund Bonner of London produced an admonition addressed to those who sought to read the Bibles that had been placed in parish churches. The reader was instructed to call to mind "his perfect and most bounden duty of obedience to the king's majesty" and to "bring with him discretion, honest intent, charity, reverence, and quiet behaviour."[81]

In 1543, the government went much further. In that year, Henry VIII was personally involved in the production of the "King's Book," a statement of faith for the English church that reaffirmed conservative positions on a range of theological issues including the sacraments and justification. Its preface also declared, "It ought to be deemed certainly, that the reading of the Old and New Testament is not so necessary for all those folks, that of duty they ought, and be bound to read, but as the prince and policy of the realm shall think convenient."[82] This had been Henry's position since at least 1530 and it does not seem to have changed. This year also witnessed the passage of the Act for the Advancement of True Religion. This legislation declared that "no manner of persons…should take upon them to read openly to others in any church or open assembly, within any of the king's dominions, the Bible or any part of the Scripture in English unless he was so appointed thereunto by the king."[83] It also restricted private Bible reading to the upper classes and forbade access to artificers, appren-

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[80] Hughes, *Royal Tudor Proclamations*, 284. If Hughes and Larkin have correctly dated this proclamation, Henry was probably referring to readers of Matthew's Bible since the Great Bible would not yet have been widely available.

[81] Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, 267.

[82] Quoted in John Eadie, *The English Bible: An External and Critical History of the Various English Translations of Scripture* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1876), 411.

[83] Eadie, *The English Bible: An External and Critical History*, 409.

tices, husbandmen, and laborers, and to most women.[84] These arrangements are much closer to the situation depicted in the Great Bible woodcut and appear to be a repudiation of the inclusivity advocated by Cranmer.

Nevertheless, the clock was not and could not have been turned back entirely. Although the Act for the Advancement of True Religion specifically condemned William Tyndale's translation and declared that it should "utterly be abolished and extinguished," it commanded that the Great Bible (largely a revision of Tyndale's work) should remain available in local churches.[85] There were also far more copies of the English Bible in circulation than there had been a decade earlier. While there were only nine English translations of parts of the Bible produced by 1533, there were ten such publications in the year the royal supremacy was instituted alone. There were twenty-three separate printings in 1538, the year the Great Bible was authorized.[86] In all, between Tyndale's 1526 New Testament and Henry's death in January 1547, there were more than fifty editions of either the New Testament or the whole Bible.[87] The fact that Tyndale's translations were once again condemned in a royal proclamation in July 1546, the final year of Henry's reign, demonstrates that they were still available and were being circulated and read.[88]

In his last speech before Parliament in 1546, Henry returned to the issue of the English Bible once again:

> al though you be permitted to reade holy scripture, and to have the word of God in your mother tongue, you must understande that it is licensed you so to do, onely to informe your awne conscience…I am very sory to knowe and here, how unreverently that moste precious juel the worde

[84] Eadie, *The English Bible: An External and Critical History*, 409. James Simpson has observed that these elements of the Act for the Advancement of True Religion reveal "fantasies of royal control over private and domestic spaces, as well as royal control of how people read" [James Simpson, *Burning to Read: English Fundamentalism and Its Reformation Opponents* (Cambridge: Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 2007) 55].

[85] Eadie, *The English Bible: An External and Critical History*, 408.

[86] Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation*, 98–99.

[87] David Daniell counts sixteen editions of Tyndale's New Testament, twenty-two of Coverdale's Bible, two of Matthew's Bible, three of Richard Taverner's revision, and fourteen of the Great Bible (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 810n85).

[88] Hughes, *Royal Tudor Proclamations*, 374. The same proclamation also forbade the reading or circulation of Tyndale's polemical works, which, unlike those of More, remained popular and were available in several new editions.

> of God is disputed, rymed, sung and jangeled in every Alehouse and Taverne.[89]

Henry's frustration is evident. However, although he could rail against those who abused the privilege he had granted them, he was not at liberty to completely remove it. Even if he did not accept the protestant principle of *sola scriptura*, the royal supremacy was predicated on the association of the Word of God and obedience. Equally important, Henry had come to think of himself as a Josiah, who had restored the scriptures to his people.[90] The English Bible was also an important part of the effort to break with Rome and establish a distinct national religious identity. In Rosendale's words:

> The Reformation impulse towards the vernacular . . . in its correlation of territorial national identity with its indigenous language, [is] clearly a politically significant phenomenon: the move to English (among other languages, elsewhere) helped both to break the papal hegemony over Europe and to linguistically define England as a separate, sovereign and coherent political entity.[91]

Tyndale's vernacular translations had a pervasive influence on this new vernacular religious culture and on English literature more generally.[92] Indeed, Tyndale was one of the earliest advocates of the capacity of the English tongue as a medium for religious discussion.

III. *The Religious and Political Legacies of Tyndale's Thought*

By the time the Great Bible with its title-page woodcut and Cranmer's preface became available in 1539/40, Tyndale had already been dead for almost four years. Lured from the relative safety of the English merchants' House in Antwerp by Henry Phillips in May 1535, Tyndale was arrested by imperial authorities. He was not without supporters. Thomas Poyntz, the head of the English House and a friend of Tyndale, wrote to his brother John Poyntz, a member of the royal household,

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[89] Quoted in Rosendale, "Language, Liturgy, and the Paradox of the English Reformation," 1161–1162.

[90] Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation*, 84.

[91] Rosendale, "Language, Liturgy, and the Paradox of the English Reformation," 1151.

[92] For further discussion, see John King, *English Reformation Literature: The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

asking for help. Cromwell briefly became involved, sending letters that eventually reached Poyntz in the Low Countries.[93] However, despite the profound changes even then taking place within the English church, Henry VIII had no interest in aiding a man he regarded as a heretic. On April 13, 1536, Stephen Vaughn sent Cromwell one final letter advising him that it was not too late to save Tyndale if concerted action was taken immediately.[94] There was no response from London. Tyndale went to the stake at Vilvorde Castle outside Brussels in late October or early November of 1536.

Despite his premature death in his early forties, Tyndale's influence continued to be felt in his homeland. Most obvious was the influence of his translations on subsequent English Bibles, both in the years immediately following his execution and over the centuries to come. Looking beyond the Bibles produced in the sixteenth century, for example, one scholar has estimated that eighty-three percent of the King James New Testament follows Tyndale's earlier rendering.[95] Tyndale's other writings were also reprinted, suggesting continuing demand. *Obedience of a Christian Man* was reissued in London by Thomas Godfray in 1536/7, while *Parable of the Wicked Mammon* was republished there in both 1536 and 1537. Miles Coverdale, Tyndale's collaborator, the editor of the Great Bible, and later an influential Edwardian and Elizabethan churchman, continued to advocate his mentor's ideas.[96] In his important study on England's early Protestants, William Clebsch observed that while individuals such as Thomas Cranmer and Hugh Latimer would become leading lights of the movement after the break with Rome in the mid 1530s, they were largely "peripheral" in the crucial early years where Tyndale and other exiles took center stage.[97] The martyrologist John Foxe, who was involved in reprinting Tyndale's writings yet again during Elizabeth's reign, certainly would have agreed. In his sweeping narrative of English religious history, Foxe unreservedly proclaimed Tyndale "the Apostle of England."[98]

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[93] Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography*, 369–371.
[94] Ibid., 372.
[95] Daniell, *Bible in English*, 448.
[96] See the discussion of Coverdale's *The Christen rule or state* (1547) in Chapter Three.
[97] Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants*, 276.
[98] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1570), 1224.

Tyndale also enjoyed a prominent place in the historiography of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[99] Echoing John Foxe, the Victorian scholar Francis Fry praised Tyndale as "the great Apostle of pure Christianity and of Protestantism in England."[100] Many nineteenth-century antiquarians were primarily interested in Tyndale's contributions to the later King James Version and to the development of the English language more generally.[101] However, they also began the process of collecting information about his life beyond what was available in the various editions of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*.[102] This culminated in the production of the first full-length biography of the reformer and translator by Robert Demaus in 1886.[103] Demaus' biography was updated and reissued in 1925, but it was soon supplanted by the publication of J.F. Mozley's *William Tyndale* in 1937, still probably the most cited biography of Tyndale.[104]

However, in the second half of the twentieth century Tyndale began to receive less attention from scholars. More than any other factor, this trend reflected the impact of revisionism on English Reformation history beginning in the 1970s. Older accounts had accepted sixteenth-century reformers' criticisms of the late medieval Catholic Church relatively uncritically and had portrayed the pre-Reformation church as extremely corrupt and unpopular. This was certainly a legitimate criticism of Tyndale's early biographers Demaus and Mozley.[105] Revisionists such as Christopher Haigh and Eamon Duffy effectively challenged this old orthodoxy as whiggish and teleological.[106] They

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[99] C.H. Williams offers a very useful account of this early historiography in an appendix entitled "Note on Tyndale Studies" in his biography of Tyndale (Williams, *William Tyndale*, 157–165).

[100] Francis Fry, ed., *The First New Testament Printed in the English Language, 1525 or 1526* (Bristol: Printed by the Editor, 1862), 18.

[101] George Offor, ed., *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (Andover: Gould & Newman, 1837), *v*; B.F. Westcott and W.A. Wright, *A General View of the History of the English Bible* [London: Macmillan and Co., 1905 (1868), 316].

[102] Edward Arber, ed., *The First Printed English New Testament. Facsimile texts* (London: s.n., 1871), 7–64.

[103] Robert Demaus, *William Tindale* [London: The Religious Tract Society, 1925 (1886)].

[104] J.F. Mozley, *William Tyndale* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1937).

[105] Demaus, *William Tindale*, 31–33; Mozley, *William Tyndale*, 9.

[106] As Haigh explained, "it [i.e. teleological narrative] finds the origins of the known result, explains by alleged modernizing forces, and shows how the bad old past became the brave new future. England abandoned superstitious Catholicism, and took up sensible Protestantism, as progress had determined it would… whig history charts the corruption and decay of Catholicism (which must have decayed, because it lost),

have demonstrated that Catholicism was thriving among people at the local level on the eve of the Reformation. In the words of Katherine French, parishioners in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries "were not waiting for the Reformation."[107] For the revisionists, the early English reformers became a tiny minority whose works influenced few outside of London and the universities. As a result, Tyndale has become a less important character in more recent narrative accounts of the period. As one prominent example, the index of Eamon Duffy's extremely influential 654-page work *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580* has just two references to Tyndale, both only passing remarks.[108]

Due to these historiographical trends, William Tyndale's legacy remains contested and unclear. Older exalted claims for his significance as both a religious and political thinker have largely been supplanted by a more recent interpretation of the Reformation in which he and his fellow reformers in exile have been largely marginalized. Certainly they felt themselves to be marginalized and oppressed at the time, the object of intense pressure from both ecclesiastical and secular authorities. However, as the previous chapters have shown, the influence that Tyndale and his associates wielded and the response that they provoked from their opponents in the 1520s and 1530s suggests that it would be a mistake to overlook them in any well-rounded account of the early English Reformation. In the final pages of this conclusion, I would like to suggest several possible aspects of Tyndale's more long-term influence in light of the analysis of his religious and political thought offered in the present study.

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and…charts the growth of popular Protestantism (which must have been popular, because it won)" [Christopher Haigh, *Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 15].

[107] Katherine French, *The People of the Parish: Community Life in a Late Medieval English Diocese* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 208.

[108] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 215, 433. Popular interest in Tyndale has been revived somewhat by the work of David Daniell, who published a new biography of the reformer in 1994 to commemorate the five hundred year anniversary of Tyndale's birth. However, Daniell's writings have been criticized by some scholars as overly confessional and a return to the excesses of nineteenth-century historiography (Simpson, *Burning to Read*, 26–29). Tyndale studies have also been hampered by an over reliance on the nineteenth-century Parker Society editions of Tyndale's works, still the most readily available form of many of his writings.

To begin, let us consider Tyndale's legacy and its impact on subsequent English religious history. It was commonly asserted throughout much of the twentieth century that Tyndale should be regarded as the father of Puritanism. This was one of the recurring arguments of William Clebsch's *England's Earliest Protestants*, that Tyndale was "the real if unacknowledged founder of the type of English-speaking Christianity that is commonly called Puritan."[109] In pursuing this line of thought, Clebsch was merely building on a well-established school of thought dating back to M.M. Knappen's *Tudor Puritanism* (1939) and Leonard Trinterud's slightly later article on "The Origins of Puritanism," which argued that "Puritanism was indigenous, not exotic, to England."[110] However, the great difficulty with these attempts to connect Tyndale to Puritanism is that they were not able to demonstrate the direct textual influence of his works on later English writers.

By the late 1960s, the association of Tyndale with later Puritanism had begun to be questioned. In his biography of Tyndale, published in 1969, C.H. Williams directly challenged Clebsch's assumptions:

> What is wrong, of course, is that the commentator is looking through the wrong end of the telescope. The result is an exaggerated estimate of Tyndale's achievement… Looked at by itself, without any of the accretions suggested by hindsight, Tyndale's theology would seem to need considerable extension before it would serve the purposes of fully developed Puritan doctrine.[111]

A survey of the most current work on English Puritanism suggests that historians have tended to agree with Williams. In his contribution to the recent *Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, an essay entitled "The Growth of English Puritanism," John Craig concludes that Puritanism "was, above all, an Elizabethan story."[112] Indeed, the whole volume of essays contains only one reference to Tyndale and this is a reference to Knappen's work from the 1930s.

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[109] Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants*, 9. In another place, Clebsch calls Tyndale's *Pathway*, an updated version of his 1525 introduction to the New Testament, the "magna carta of English Puritanism" (Ibid., 167).

[110] M.M. Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism: A Chapter in the History of Idealism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939); Leonard Trinterud, "The Origins of Puritanism," Church History, Vol. 20, No. 1 (1951): 37.

[111] Williams, *William Tyndale*, 134.

[112] John Craig, "The Growth of English Puritanism," in John Coffey and Paul Lim, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 35.

However, as with the more general tendency of revisionism to neglect Tyndale and his influence during the early English Reformation, the historiographical pendulum seems to have swung too far in this case as well. Although Patrick Collinson, one of the most influential writers on English Puritanism in the last forty years, was substantially correct when he concluded, "It is impossible to connect Tyndale with any of the mature and formalized expressions of English Protestantism in the age of establishment… He was in the best sense too radical," this need not imply that Tyndale should be written out of Puritanism's back story entirely.[113] It would be extremely surprising if there were not important differences between the thought of Tyndale and that of later Elizabethan or seventeenth-century Puritans. As time passed the religious and political circumstances in England changed significantly. Tyndale's possible connections to later Puritanism have also been further obscured by a growing awareness of the influence of the Swiss reformers on the development of the English church, both during Henry's reign and also in the second half of the sixteenth century.[114] However, neither subsequent development nor possible outside influences should obscure the important echoes of some of Tyndale's central principles in the priorities of later Puritanism.

One obvious example is the emphasis among Puritans on personal Bible reading.[115] Although after 1560, the Geneva Bible began to supplant earlier editions of scripture, the Bible of Shakespeare, Milton, and the Pilgrims continued to resound with the cadences of Tyndale's first translation.[116] More important than aesthetic influence, however, was the preservation of Tyndale's insistence that the Bible should be read by even humble Christians, not just by the clergy.[117] In addition,

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[113] Patrick Collinson, "William Tyndale and the Course of the English Reformation," *Reformation*, Vol. 1 (1996): 72–97.

[114] This influence has been extensively documented by Torrance Kirby in *The Zurich Connection and Tudor Political Theology* (2007). It is further suggested by the fact that there were ninety editions of Calvin's works and 56 editions of texts by Theodore Beza produced in England by 1600 (Anthony Milton, "Puritanism and the Continental Reformed Churches," in Coffey, *Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, 116).

[115] Coffey, *Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, 35, 174.

[116] Daniell, *Bible in English*, 301.

[117] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. B5r–6r. The seventeenth-century London artisan and Puritan Nehemiah Wallington (1598–1658), whose journals have been explored by Paul Seaver, was just the kind of individual Bible-reading layman that Tyndale had imagined a century earlier [Paul Seaver, *Wallington's World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 185].

he helped to introduce the language of covenant into English religious life and, far more than Luther, he stressed the importance of moral discipline among the redeemed.[118] Tyndale also emphasized election/predestination throughout his writings, which would later be an essential component of Puritan self-understanding.[119]

Puritan ecclesiology, with its frequent distrust of episcopacy, also appears to echo ideas developed in Tyndale's earlier works. For example, neither Tyndale in the 1520s nor Thomas Cartwright in the 1570s could find any solid biblical basis for the distinction between bishops and ordinary priests.[120] As the discussion of Tyndale's ecclesiology in Chapter Two makes clear, Tyndale never developed a coherent congregational or Presbyterian alternative to the church structure of his day, nor should we expect him to have done so.[121] Unlike some later English reformers, he was never in a position to actually shape the organization of the English church at either the local or national level. It is also worth noting that Lutheranism, the most prominent example of a reformed church during Tyndale's lifetime, preserved the episcopal system.

To return to Patrick Collinson's earlier statement, Tyndale was perhaps "too radical" to be regarded as the father of English Puritanism in any straightforward sense.[122] His life as a religious exile meant that he never had to struggle with implementing concrete reforms. His arrest and his premature death in 1536 allowed him to avoid the difficult decisions faced by some of his fellow reformers regarding how much to compromise with the new Henrician state church. However, it can

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[118] "England's earliest Protestants and their books stamped English-speaking Christianity with a concern that persists and prevails even in our day—concern for morality as the clue to theology and the core of religion" (Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants*, 2–3); Coffey, *Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, 174.

[119] William Tyndale, *That fayth the mother of all good workes iustifieth us* {*Parable of the Wicked Mammon*} (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1528), sig. E8v; Thomas More, *A dyaloge of syr Thomas More knyghte… touchyng the pestilent secte of Luther & Tyndale* (London, John Rastell, 1529), sig. U3v.

[120] William Tyndale, *The practyse of Prelates. Whether the Kinges grace maye be separated from hys queen, be cause she was his brothers wyfe* (Antwerp, Hoochstraten, 1530), sig. B4r–v; Coffey, *Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, 38; see also, George Joye, *The letters which Johnn Ashwel Priour of Newnham Abbey… sente secretely to the Bishope of Lyncolne* (Antwerp, Merten de Keyser, 1531{?}), sig. A1v.

[121] Although this did not stop Christopher Hill from concluding, "Tyndale was the father of congregational independency, whether or not that was his intention" [Christopher Hill, "Tyndale and His Successors," *Reformation*, Vol. 1 (1996): 98–112].

[122] Collinson, "William Tyndale and the Course of the English Reformation," *Reformation*, Vol. 1 (1996): 72–97.

also be argued that in his unwillingness to compromise his evangelical convictions Tyndale became, to echo another more famous phrase of Collinson's, the first in a long line of "the hotter sort of Protestants."[123]

The long term political impact of Tyndale's writings also deserves further consideration. Certainly on the surface, Tyndale was an extremely conservative political thinker. As Christopher Morris observed, "In the long run Protestantism was to stand for the rights of conscience against all earthly principalities and powers; but the immediate political effects of the Protestant religion were very different. For some time its political teaching was to be authoritarian and its potential liberalism was to remain concealed."[124] Tyndale's statements glorifying the power of the king in the temporal sphere seem to point more towards Hobbesian absolutism than towards Lockean republicanism.[125] In contrast to many other sixteenth-century religious reformers such as John Calvin or John Knox, Tyndale appears to deny any right to resist political tyranny.[126]

However, this is not the whole story. Tyndale's entire career in exile constituted a sustained challenge to both ecclesiastical and political authorities who had forbidden the distribution of his translations and other writings.[127] While he glorified the power of the king in the secular sphere, I have argued that he did so primarily as a means of curtailing the coercive authority that the Catholic Church had come

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[123] Coffey, *Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, 20; see also, Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

[124] Christopher Morris, *Political Thought in England: Tyndale to Hooker* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 28.

[125] "God hath made the kīge in every realme iudge over all ād over him is there no iudge. He y^{t} iudgeth the kinge iudgeth God & he that layeth hādes on the kīge layth hāde on God ād he that resisteth the kinge resisteth God" (Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. D7v–8r). That Tyndale and Hobbes held very different views when it came to the spiritual sphere is evident from the latter's criticism of the leveling tendencies of vernacular scripture. Hobbes complained, "Every man, nay every boy and wench that could read English thought they spoke with God Almighty, and understood what he said, when by a certain number of chapters a day they had read the Scripture once or twice over" [Quote in Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution, 1603–1714* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1961), 173].

[126] For further discussion, refer to Chapter One. See also, Richard Greaves, "Concepts of Political Obedience in Late Tudor England: Conflicting Perspectives," *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (1982): 23–34; William Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. C7r; William Tyndale, *An exposicion vppon the v. vi. vii. chapters of Matthew which thre chaptres are the keye and the dore of the scripture* (Antwerp, Johannes Graphaeus, 1533), sig. g7r–v.

[127] Joan Lockwood O'Donovan, *Theology of Law an Authority in the English Reformation* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 57.

to exercise. When it came to religious matters, Tyndale counseled his readers not to resist tyrants with violence but nevertheless to stand firm in their beliefs and in their devotion to scripture.[128] Also, while he defended hierarchical arrangements in the temporal sphere, Tyndale simultaneously attacked hierarchy in the spiritual regiment arguing that "[t]he most despised person in his realme is the kynges brother and felow mēbre with him and equall with him in the kindome of God and of Christe."[129] Tyndale's ecclesiology, centered on the notion of the congregation as a body of fundamentally equal individual believers, began the process of eroding longstanding assumptions of "hierarchical complementarity" within European society, a process that would ultimately have profound implications in both the religious and political spheres.[130]

Tyndale also contributed to subsequent political developments by appealing directly to a nascent public through print and in the vernacular. His writings undoubtedly provoked Cuthbert Tunstal's decision to commission Thomas More to respond to Tyndale's challenge, making religious reform a topic for open public debate. Tyndale also challenged Henry VIII to make the case for his divorce to his subjects; "If the kinges most noble grace will neades haue a nother wyfe, then let hī serch the lawes of god, whether it be lawfull…then let his grace put forth a litle treatyse in prynte and euen in the english tongue that all mē maye se it, for…the defence of his deade.[131] The early 1530s would

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[128] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. B4r; Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 92.

[129] Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*, sig. G3v. The potential political implications of this position and the extent to which equality in the religious sphere could bleed over into the political realm become apparent in Tyndale's commentary on the Sermon on the Mount: "Though euerye mannes bodye and goodes be vnder the kynge doo he ryght or wronge, yet is the auctoryte of Godes worde fre and aboue the kynge: so that the worst in the realme maye tell the kynge, if he do him wronge, that he dothe nought and other wyse then God hath cōmaunded him, & so warne him to auoyde the wrath of God…Maye I then and ought also, to resist father and mother and all temporall power with Godes worde, whan they wrongfullye doo or cōmaunde" (Tyndale, *Exposition unto Matthew V–VII*, sig. d5v–6r).

[130] Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 15–16; Paul Arblaster, Gergely Juhász, and Guido Latré, *Tyndale's Testament* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 19. As one conservative member of Parliament declared in 1641 at the beginning of the English Civil War, "if we make parity in the church, we must at last come to a parity in the common wealth" (Quoted in Hill, *Century of Revolution*, 126).

[131] William Tyndale, *Practice of Prelates*, sig. H7r.

indeed see "a major campaign of propaganda and publication" orchestrated by Henry's regime, first to justify the divorce and then to support the break with Rome and the institution of the royal supremacy.[132] The public to which Tyndale, More, and Henry appealed in the early sixteenth century was certainly not identical to the bourgeois public sphere that Habermas later described. However, it was the beginning of a discursive space that would subsequently allow individuals from across the social spectrum to become involved in public debate to a degree previously unimaginable.

[132] Roland Worth, *Church, Monarch and Bible in Sixteenth Century England: The Political Context of Biblical Translation* (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2000), 8.

AFTERWORD

This study has taken as its three main protagonists William Tyndale, Thomas More, and Henry VIII. In their own way, each played a decisive role in shaping the religious and political landscape of England during the early years of the English Reformation. They are classic examples of what the nineteenth-century British author Thomas Carlyle called "heroes" of history, individuals who seem to embody the major forces at work in the world of their time.[1] Henry and More have long been the objects of both scholarly and popular interest and Tyndale is beginning to receive the attention his life and work deserve, a trend to which this study hopes to contribute. Nevertheless, this book is not just about individuals. It is also about the broader developments and processes that made this period such a pivotal and transformative one. My title, *Printing, Power, and Piety: Appeals to the Public during the Early Years of the English Reformation*, indicates four such developments or spheres which experienced profound change.

Without the introduction of printing in the fifteenth century, the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century might have had the same limited impact as the late medieval reform movements of Wyclif and Hus, a possibility acknowledged clearly by the martyrologist John Foxe.[2] The connection between printing and Protestantism has also been recognized by generations of scholars but the medium of print was particularly important for the exiled English reformers of the 1520s and 1530s.[3] Compared to many of their contemporaries on the Continent, the English were slow to recognize the full potential of

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[1] Indeed, they represent, in the terminology of Sidney Hook, not just "eventful men" but "event-making men"—Hook characterizes the former as men "whose actions influenced subsequent developments along a quite different course than would have been followed if these actions had not been taken" and the latter as men "whose actions are the consequence of outstanding capacities of intelligence, will, and character rather than of accidents of position" [Sidney Hook, *The Hero in History: A Study in Limitation and Possibility* (New York: The Humanities Press, 1943), 154].

[2] John Foxe, *The whole workes of W. Tyndall, Iohn Frith, and Doct. Barnes, three worthy Martyrs, and principall teachers of this Church of England, collected and compiled in one Tome together, beyng before scattered, & now in Print here exhibited to the Churche* (London, John Day, 1573), sig. A2r.

[3] A.G. Dickens, *Reform and Society in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1966), 51; Edwards, *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther*, 1.

the printing press. The volume of printed material in the early decades of the English Reformation was limited, even when compared with print production in the Elizabethan period.[4] However, the books and pamphlets considered in this study mark the beginning of a period of sustained, even exponential growth.[5] Access to this ever-growing body of printed materials, much of it in English, had profound implications for the dissemination of information and the formation of public opinion. These developments should be of particular interest to the present generation, which has also experienced the proliferation of new media which are remaking our world.

This study has also explored the careers of Tyndale, More, and Henry VIII within the broader context of the struggle to define the relationship between political and religious authority, and between the secular and sacred spheres. In most cases, it was secular leaders who won this struggle and who came to dominate the ecclesiastical hierarchies, both in Protestant and in Catholic countries. However, by maintaining such a firm distinction between the two spheres Tyndale contributed to the emphasis on freedom of conscience that has become such a defining characteristic of modern western society.[6] While the new Tudor state and church were a reaffirmation of the traditional hierarchical view of society, what Charles Taylor has termed "hierarchical complementarity," their theological underpinnings pointed in another direction, to the centrality of the individual and to the importance of public debate.[7]

With regard to piety, this study has shown that although politics, dynastic concerns, and economic laws of supply and demand were all at work, for the major protagonists religious concerns remained dominant. Thus, for example, Henry VIII chose to frame the case for his annulment primarily in reference to Old Testament law. Tyndale

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[4] It was only at the end of the sixteenth century that one can begin to find what Tessa Watt called "cheap print," a plethora of mass-produced and transitory printed materials in a wide range of genres intended for popular consumption [Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550–1640* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991)].

[5] For example, the number of vernacular Bibles in circulation in the century after 1526, when Tyndale's Worms New Testament appeared, jumped from in the hundreds to in the millions [David Daniell, *The Bible in English* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 66, 121].

[6] William Tyndale, *An exposicion vppon the v. vi. vii. chapters of Matthew which thre chaptres are the keye and the dore of the scripture* (Antwerp, Johannes Graphaeus, 1533), sig. d5v–6r.

[7] Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 15–16.

and More went further, each making the ultimate sacrifice and earning reputations as martyrs among the adherents of their respective camps.[8] It was the religious passion and conviction of those involved that fueled the explosion of printed material which this book has examined. In particular, the evangelical theology of Tyndale and his fellow reformers, stressing as it did the individual experience of justification and the priesthood of all believers, played a vital role in the emergence of new mentalities and new notions of authority and legitimacy. On the other hand, their emphasis on individual interpretation also contributed to the subsequent fragmentation of Protestantism.[9]

Finally, this study has demonstrated that the combination of religious concerns and political struggles, when combined with the new technology of printing and the process of vernacularization, contributed to the emergence of a new discursive space which would be the forerunner of the modern public sphere. The exiled evangelicals, the defenders of the Catholic Church, and the spokesmen of the Henrician regime all made concerted appeals to a reading public, although there were fundamental disagreements about the capacities of that public.[10] Scholars of the early modern period have been right to argue that the sixteenth century witnessed the formation of a public sphere, although they have often been insufficiently nuanced in their analysis of its nature and its limits.[11] Nevertheless, a careful study of the dynamics at work in early sixteenth-century England elucidates some of the vital prerequisites for the later emergence of a Habermasian public sphere.

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[8] On the broader importance of martyrdom in the sixteenth century, see Brad Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

[9] Thomas More predicted just such a phenomenon [Thomas More, *The cōfutacyon of Tyndales answere made by Thomas More knght lorde chaūcellor of Englonde* (London, William Rastell, 1532), sig. o2v].

[10] It is important to remember as well that the writings of the reformers played an instrumental role in provoking representatives of the other two camps to engage in literary campaigns in the vernacular. To quote again a passage from *Practice of Prelates*, "If the kinges most noble grace will neades haue a nother wyfe, then let hī serch the lawes of god, whether it be lawfull…then let his grace put forth a litle treatyse in prynte and euen in the english tongue that all mē maye se it, for his excuse and the defence of his deade" [William Tyndale, *The practyse of Prelates. Whether the Kinges grace maye be separated from hys queen, be cause she was his brothers wyfe* (Antwerp, Hoochstraten, 1530), sig. H7r.]

[11] Peter Lake & Steve Pincus, *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); Natalie Mears, "Counsel, Public Debate, and Queenship: John Stubbs's 'The Discovery of a Gaping Gulf', 1579," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 44, No. 3, (2001): 629–650.

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INDEX

Abraham 49n63, 67
Act for the Advancement of True Religion (Henry VIII, 1543) 135, 202–203
Act in Restrain of Appeals (Henry VIII, 1533) 53n87, 104, 148–149, 176, 179
Act of Six Articles (Henry VIII, 1539) 198
Act of Succession (Henry VIII, 1534) 149–150
Act of Supremacy (Henry VIII, 1534) 149–150
Acts and Monuments (Foxe) 16–17, 77, 80, 116, 192n35, 206
Anabaptists 42
Anne of Cleves 198
Answer to a Certain Letter of Martin Luther (Henry VIII) 188n20
Answer to a Letter (St. German) 175
Answer to More's Letter (Frith) 114n50
Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue (Tyndale) 50, 77, 82, 111, 124n101, 125–126, 131, 133–134
Antichrist 53, 101
anticlericalism 36n10, 37, 53n84, 54n90, 110, 116, 118–119, 140, 176. *See also* clergy; priest(s)
Antwerp 3, 79, 84–86, 105, 111, 115, 124, 126, 131, 137, 188–189, 204
Apology made by George Joye (Joye) 85
Apology of Sir Thomas More Knight (More) 77n19, 108n25, 110n31
apostolic succession 36, 55–56
Aquinas, Thomas 94
Arundel, Thomas (archbishop of Canterbury) 25, 186
Assertio Septem Sacramentorum (Henry VIII) 1, 44, 46n52, 73
Augustine, Aurelius 63, 94
authority 2, 5, 11, 27–28, 40n24, 42, 45, 68–70, 155, 194, 197, 217
  religious 5, 28–31, 39, 40n24, 41–45, 49, 55, 60–62, 68, 98, 113, 122, 149, 151n24, 166n104, 175, 177, 179, 194, 201, 211, 216
  secular 5, 32, 38, 40n25, 59–60, 113, 138, 139n166, 142, 148, 156, 158–170, 175, 194, 200, 216
Babylonian Captivity of the Church (Luther) 46n52, 76
Bainham, James 78, 82
baptism 35, 46–47, 98
Barlow, Jerome 2, 54n90, 100, 127n112
  Read Me and Be Not Wroth 100, 127n112
Barnes, Robert 2, 16, 18, 21, 39, 51n73, 52, 54, 57, 60, 71–72, 75, 81–82, 86, 111–114, 129n125, 137–140, 142, 146–147, 151–153, 157, 164, 175, 177, 179, 187, 198
  Supplication unto Henry VIII (1531) 39, 51n73, 111–113, 138–139, 146, 157
  Supplication unto Henry VIII (1534) 52n83, 57, 111n37, 151, 179
Bayfield, Richard 78, 80–82, 109, 140
Bergen-op-Zoom 123
Berthelet, Thomas 4, 113. *See also* printer(s)
Beza, Theodore 29, 30n146, 209n114
Bible(s). *See also* New Testament; Old Testament; scripture; Word of God
  cost of 18–19, 80–82
  burning of 3, 73, 100–101, 105, 122, 128, 147
  English
    Coverdale Bible 1, 16, 80, 84, 151, 171, 189–191, 193, 195–197, 203n87
    Geneva Bible 193, 209
    Great Bible 25, 29, 34, 58, 66n150, 92n95, 134n143, 181, 183–185, 188, 192–195, 198–199, 201–205
    King James Bible 193, 205–206
    Lollard Bible 18, 24n118, 71
    Matthew's Bible 135n145, 191–192, 197, 202n80, 203n87
    Rheims Bible 67, 134n143
  French 79n32, 135n145
  German 25, 79n33, 85n58, 186, 189
  interpretation of 49, 62, 64–65, 76, 95–97, 122, 135, 162, 165, 178, 217
  Latin 21n97, 24, 56, 67n155, 78, 134n143
Bible in English [Great Bible] (Cranmer, preface) 25, 29, 34, 58, 66n150,

92n95, 134n143, 181, 183–185, 188, 192–195, 198–199, 201–205
Bible which is all the Holy Scripture [Matthew's Bible] (Rogers) 135n145, 191–192, 197, 202n80, 203n87
Biblia The Bible [Coverdale Bible] (Coverdale) 1, 16, 80, 84, 151, 171, 189–191, 193, 195–197, 203n87
Bilney, Thomas 106, 109, 137
bishop(s) 21, 31, 36, 52–57, 60n121, 64, 77, 89, 101n139, 127, 141, 152, 158, 176, 186–187, 192, 210. *See also* prelate(s)
Bishop of Rome 54n87, 89, 149. *See also* pope(s)
Boleyn, Anne 4, 30–31, 78–79, 103–104, 120
Bonner, Edmund (bishop of London) 202
Book Named the Governor (Elyot) 22, 177
Bordeaux 74n10
Brethren, the 52, 75, 84n54, 100, 107–109, 124, 136–137, 168
Bristol 20
Brussels 5, 124n98, 191, 205
Bugenhagen, John 39
Bullinger, Heinrich 29, 171, 197
Byddell, John 151, 179. *See also* printer(s)

Caesaropapism 148, 154
Calvin, John 20n93, 29–30, 209n114, 211
Cambridge 21, 72, 78, 81, 106, 109, 112, 138
Campeggio, Lorenzo (cardinal-protector of England) 103, 120n84
Canterbury 81, 139
Cartwright, Thomas 210
Castle of Health (Elyot) 23
Catherine of Aragon 4, 103–104, 178
Catholic Church 5, 27, 32, 36, 38, 43–44, 46, 55, 62, 65–68, 70, 91, 97–98, 103, 109, 114, 116, 146, 149n17, 151, 161, 176, 206, 211, 217
celibacy 36, 57. *See also* marriage
Chapuys, Eustace 101n142, 112–113, 122n90, 123, 131, 141
Charles V 4n13, 5, 29, 103n1, 112, 122n90
Christian Rule or State of All the World (Coverdale) 88, 205n96
church. *See also* Catholic Church; congregation; *ecclesia*
  definitions of 35n3, 43–44, 50–52, 98
  English 37, 50, 59, 86, 90, 97, 145–146, 149–150, 153, 160, 170, 179, 188, 202, 205, 209–210
  local 52, 56, 60, 98, 152, 168, 192, 203, 210
Clement VII (pope) 4n13, 103, 149
clergy 13, 24, 26, 31, 36, 38, 43, 48–49, 52–53, 56–62, 66, 69, 71, 92–98, 116–119, 122, 126–127, 129, 138–139, 142, 148–150, 158–161, 166–169, 183, 187, 189n25, 196, 209. *See also* bishop(s); priest(s)
Cologne 1, 25, 79, 124, 135n144, 161
Compendious Introduction to Romans (Tyndale) 66n152
Confutation of Tyndale's Answer (More) 35, 77, 90, 100, 104
congregation 2, 26–27, 32, 41, 51, 53, 59–60, 68, 98, 139, 152, 168, 210, 212. *See also* church; *ecclesia*
Constantine, George 75, 106, 108–109, 115, 137
Convocation 139, 142, 148–150, 193
Coplande, William 86. *See also* printer(s)
Coverdale, Miles 1, 16, 50, 84, 88–89, 147, 151, 171, 174, 188–193, 195–198, 200, 203n87, 205
  Biblia The Bible [Coverdale Bible] 1, 16, 80, 84, 151, 171, 189–191, 193, 195–197, 203n87
  Christian Rule or State of All the World 88, 205n96
Cranmer, Thomas (archbishop of Canterbury) 25, 27n131, 50, 55, 58, 66n150, 92n95, 103–104, 113n45, 148, 174, 186n14, 191–194, 196, 198–205
  Bible in English [Great Bible] (preface) 25, 29, 34, 58, 66n150, 92n95, 134n143, 181, 183–185, 188, 192–195, 198–199, 201–205
Cromwell, Thomas 4–5, 33, 43, 67, 81, 101, 112–113, 115, 121–125, 131–133, 135, 137–138, 140–141, 145n2, 149–150, 177, 183, 186n14, 191–194, 196, 198, 202, 205

Dante, Alighieri 22
David (king of Israel) 163, 170, 172–173, 197–198
Day, John 16n71, 86–87, 171n129. *See also* printer(s)

deacon(s) 31, 36, 53
de Burgo, Nicholas 112
"defender of the faith" 4–5, 73, 111, 145–148, 153. *See also* Henry VIII
Defense of the Peace (Marshall, translator) 175
de Keyser, Merten 86. *See also* printer(s)
Determinations of the Universities of Italy and France (Fox) 113, 177–178
De Vera Obedientia (Gardiner) 171, 175, 180
Dialogue Concerning Heresies (More) 27, 45–46, 50n66, 64–65, 67, 75–76, 104, 117, 119n74, 155–156, 186
Dictionary of Sir Thomas Elyot Knight (Elyot) 23, 30, 165
divorce 1, 4, 17n76, 93, 103, 112, 114, 120n83, 122, 127–128, 130, 138, 140–141, 177–179, 212–213. *See also* king's great matter
Donne, John 97
Dover 81

ecclesia 26. *See also* church; congregation
Ecclesiastical Memorials (Strype) 71
ecclesiology 2, 31–32, 37, 39, 41, 50, 59–61, 98, 109, 139, 152, 168, 210, 212
Edward VI 61n126, 84n53, 171n129, 174
elder(s) 26–27, 36, 53
Elijah 61
Elizabeth I 9–10, 16n71, 34, 50, 59n118, 67, 77, 79n32, 84n53, 86–87, 205, 208–209, 216
Elyot, Thomas 22–24, 30, 165, 177
Book Named the Governor 22, 177
Castle of Health 23
Dictionary of Sir Thomas Elyot Knight 23, 30, 165
Of the Knowledge which Maketh a Wise Man 23n106
Preservation against Death 23
Endhoven, Christopher 85, 105. *See also* printer(s)
English Civil War 29, 212n130
English Reformation 1–2, 7, 23, 33, 50, 75n13, 86, 116, 141, 145, 206–207, 209, 215–216
Erasmus of Rotterdam 16, 22, 26, 45, 56n100, 67, 91–92, 96n116, 116n59, 142n182
Novum Instrumentum 96n116
Paraclesis 67
Eucharist 48n58, 88n73, 109, 152. *See also* Lord's Supper; Mass
evangelical(s) 13, 16n68, 28, 31n151, 36–37, 62, 73, 82, 109–110, 137–138, 146, 155–156, 165, 171, 192n34, 199–201, 211, 217
exile(s) 1–2, 50, 54, 74, 84n53, 107–108, 114, 120, 122–123, 132, 134, 143, 146, 158, 160, 166, 175, 177, 195, 198–199, 205, 207, 210–211, 215, 217
Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount (Tyndale) 30, 135, 154, 159, 161, 169–170, 172

Fish, Simon 2, 36n9, 53n84, 57n108, 75, 81, 106, 114–121, 123, 138, 142, 146, 175, 187
Supplication for the Beggars 53n84, 81, 114–121, 146
Fisher, John (bishop of Rochester) 5, 24n112, 42n35, 43n40, 73–74, 112, 150, 165
Fitzwilliam, William 81
Fox, Edward (bishop of Hereford) 177n158, 178n164
Determinations of the Universities of Italy and France 113, 177–178
Foxe, John 16, 18n80, 20, 77–78, 80, 82, 86–88, 106, 110, 112, 115–117, 120–122, 124, 136, 151, 189, 192n35, 205–206, 215
Acts and Monuments 16–17, 77, 80, 116, 192n35, 206
Whole Works of Tyndale, Frith, and Barnes 86–87, 151
Frankfort 123–124
Freedom of a Christian (Luther) 156
Frith, John 2, 17, 75, 86, 100, 106, 111n35, 113, 119, 132, 136–138, 187
Answer to More's Letter 114n50

Gaping Gulf (Stubbs) 10–11, 217n11
Gardiner, Stephen (bishop of Winchester) 54, 134n143, 171, 175, 180, 198
De Vera Obedientia 171, 175, 180
Germany 4, 7, 25, 27, 73n6, 84n58, 156
Gerson, Jean 17
Glass of Truth (Anonymous) 4, 122, 148, 177, 179
Gloucestershire 78, 82

Godfray, Thomas 84, 205. *See also* printer(s)
good works 47, 152, 156, 162
Gospels 64n145
grace 16n68, 45–47, 52
Grafton, Richard 184, 189, 191–192. *See also* printer(s)
Greek 22–23, 37n11, 78, 136n155, 193
Grotius, Hugo 28

Habermas, Jürgen 8–12, 14–15, 72n4, 213, 217
  Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere 8
Hackett, John 23–24, 85, 105, 124
Hall, Edward 73n7, 105, 142, 189
Hamburg 123–124
Hebrew 193
Henry VIII
  and Great Bible title-page woodcut 34, 183–197 passim
  and the English Church 1, 34, 174–204 passim
  and Thomas More 5, 33, 43–44, 103–143 passim
  and William Tyndale 2, 5, 33–34, 121–140 passim, 145–181 passim, 205
  Answer to a Certain Letter of Martin Luther 188n20
  appeals to the public 1–6, 13–15, 174–181 passim, 212–213
  Assertio Septem Sacramentorum 1, 44, 46n52, 73
  divorce 1, 4, 17n76, 93, 103, 112, 114, 120n83, 122, 127–128, 130, 138, 140–141, 177–179, 212–213
  Glass of Truth 4, 122, 148, 177, 179
  title(s) 1, 4–5, 34, 73, 107, 111, 139, 141, 145–154, 179, 189, 200
heresy 1, 3–4, 16, 24, 32, 39, 42, 48, 55, 68n155, 72–72, 76, 84n54, 90, 97, 100–101, 106–111, 119–121, 140–141, 149n20, 159n65, 186. *See also* orthodoxy
heretic(s) 3, 5, 33, 35n3, 42n35, 45, 68n155, 74, 84, 104, 107n18, 109–110, 119, 129, 156, 198, 205
Herman, Richard 79
Hezekiah (king of Judah) 172, 197n58
hierarchical complementarity 6, 13–14, 31, 41, 48, 50, 70, 184, 212, 216
Hill, Richard 87. *See also* printer(s)
Hitton, Thomas 110–111, 125
Hobbes, Thomas 31, 163n86, 211
Holbein, Hans, the Younger 184–193 passim
Holy Spirit 15, 37, 66n151, 90n84, 136, 165, 168, 170
humanism 22, 79n32, 91
humanist(s) 1, 21–22, 44, 56n99, 67–69, 84, 92, 95, 115
Hunne, Richard 110–119

illiteracy 20, 72. *See also* literacy
image(s) 20, 34, 45, 48n58, 72, 184, 193–197, 201

Jeremiah the Prophet (Joye) 65n147
Josiah (king of Judah) 147, 171–172, 197n58, 204
Joye, George 2, 54–55, 65n147, 75, 85, 100, 104n4, 106, 110–111, 136, 142n183, 174, 191n27, 198
  Apology made by George Joye 85
  Jeremiah the Prophet 65n147
  Letters which John Ashwel Prior of Newnham Abbey Sent to the Bishop of Lincoln 55n97, 106n12
  Ortulus Anime 54n88, 110–111
  Prophet Isaiah 136
justification 13, 46, 86, 152, 155–156, 180, 202

Keith, George 90
  A Looking-Glass 89–90
king(s) 12, 30–31, 33, 35, 60, 86, 88–89, 103, 138, 141–142, 147, 149, 153–175 passim, 180, 189, 193, 197–199, 211
kingdoms, two 37–38. *See also* regiments, two; religious sphere; secular sphere; temporal sphere
King's Book (Henry VIII, 1543) 202
king's great matter 4, 101, 113, 121, 123, 140–141, 148, 178, 197. *See also* divorce
Knox, John 29, 66, 211

laity 24, 27, 36, 38–39, 57, 64n145, 67, 76, 92, 97, 118, 127n115, 152, 158, 167, 170, 189n25, 195
Lambert, John 78
Latimer, Hugh (bishop of Worcester) 104n4, 129, 157n57, 158, 205
Latin 3n9, 21–23, 30, 36n6, 51, 56, 67n155, 74, 77–78, 91, 106n14, 134n143, 165, 171n129, 175, 189, 193–194

Lee, Edward (archbishop of York) 74n10, 186n11
legitimacy 2, 10–11, 14, 26–28, 56n99, 217
Leo X (pope) 1, 146n4
Letter Against John Frith (More) 17, 100
Letters which John Ashwel Prior of Newnham Abbey Sent to the Bishop of Lincoln (Joye) 55n97, 106n12
Life of Thomas More (Roper) 3n10, 44n41, 127n115, 140n173, 150n24
literacy 7, 19–20, 77n20. *See also* illiteracy
Little Treatise against the Muttering of Some Papists in Corners (Swinnerton) 10n45, 149, 175–176, 179
Locke, John 13, 28, 30–31, 211
Lollard(s) 18, 24–25, 71, 74, 80, 97, 106–108, 156, 186
London 18–20, 44, 71–72, 74, 78, 81–82, 86, 89n82, 104, 106n14, 107–108, 110, 112–113, 115, 122, 124, 129, 137n159, 138, 140, 151, 159, 179, 183, 205, 207, 209
Looking-Glass (Keith) 89–90
Lord's Supper 46n52, 92n94. *See also* Eucharist; Mass
Low Countries 85–86, 137, 177, 205. *See also* Netherlands
Luther, Martin
  and printing 4, 16, 20n89, 33, 90, 106n14, 120n84
  Babylonian Captivity of the Church 46n52, 76
  Freedom of a Christian 156
  German translations of scripture 25, 63, 79n33, 83–85, 186
  on Henry VIII's divorce 112, 138, 140, 177
  on the two kingdoms/regiments 37–40, 60–61, 152–153, 159, 165, 167n107
  Temporal Authority: To What Extent it Should be Obeyed 38, 159n65, 165
  theology 1, 24, 36–37, 42n35, 46, 51, 53, 73–74, 76–77, 112, 119n74, 136n151, 156–157, 184n7
Lutheran(s) 1, 24, 42, 73, 88n73, 90, 106n4, 107n18, 120n84, 135, 153, 159, 184n7, 198, 210
Marburg 92n94, 123–124
marriage 46, 49n63, 119. *See also* celibacy
Marshall, William 175
  Defense of the Peace (translator) 175
Marsilius of Padua 175
Mary Tudor 29, 83, 90n84, 171n129
Mass 36, 118. *See also* Eucharist; Lord's Supper
Maundrell, John 20, 78
Melanchthon, Philipp 40, 51, 132n135
Milton, John 209
monk(s) 27, 36n9, 38, 53, 57, 78, 81–82, 160
Monmouth, Humphrey 108
morality 13, 47, 93–94, 155, 196, 210
More, Thomas
  and Henry VIII 5, 33, 43–44, 103–143 passim
  Apology of Sir Thomas More Knight 77n19, 108n25, 110n31
  appeal to the public 2–5, 14, 212–213, 217
  Confutation of Tyndale's Answer 35, 77, 90, 100, 104
  death 1, 5, 84, 101–102
  Dialogue Concerning Heresies 27, 45–46, 50n66, 64–65, 67, 75–76, 104, 117, 119n74, 155–156, 186
  hammer of heretics 84
  humanist 1, 22, 44, 68–69, 84, 92, 115
  Letter Against John Frith 17, 100
  on Henry VIII's divorce 114, 127n115, 140–141
  on scripture 61–67 passim
  on the church 42–50 passim
  Responsio ad Lutherum 46n52, 51, 76–77
  Second Part of the Confutation 43, 49, 113
  Supplication of Souls 53n84, 104, 107, 114, 118–121, 146
  Utopia 22, 32–33, 42, 44n44, 84, 164n97
Muster of Schismatic Bishops of Rome (Swinnerton) 176

Nazianzus, Gregory (archbishop of Constantinople) 199
Necton, Robert 78, 80–81, 106–108, 115
Netherlands 3, 23, 124n98. *See also* Low Countries

New Testament
General References 23, 25, 36, 67, 84, 94n101, 96, 100–101, 128, 134–135, 163, 165, 173, 187, 198, 202–203, 205
Tyndale New Testaments 2n4, 18–20, 29, 71, 73n7, 77–82, 85, 96, 105, 112, 115, 120–121, 146n3, 188–189, 191n27
New Testament [Cologne] (Tyndale, 1525) 24, 124, 135n144, 161, 208n109
New Testament [Worms] (Tyndale, 1526) 3, 18, 25, 65, 84, 95–96, 135n144, 186, 203, 216n5
New Testament [Antwerp] (Tyndale, 1534) 29n142, 78–79
Nicolson, James 86. *See also* printer(s)
Nominalism 42–43, 46–47
Norwich 82, 109, 137

obedience 1, 5, 30–31, 34, 38, 55, 60, 65, 89, 113, 122, 133, 138, 140–141, 143, 152, 154–155, 157–158, 160, 162–164, 171, 173–175, 179–180, 184, 189n25, 196–197, 199–200, 202, 204
Obedience of a Christian Man (Tyndale) 2n4, 23n107, 28, 30–31, 48, 54–58, 65, 79, 82, 86–89, 94, 117–122, 127n115, 131, 148n13, 153–155, 157–159, 162, 164, 166, 168, 172–173, 176, 180, 197n59, 200, 205
Ockham, William of 43, 59n120
office(s) 31, 36, 39, 53, 55, 57, 60–61, 159
Of the Knowledge which Maketh a Wise Man (Elyot) 23n106
Oldcastle, John 156
Old Testament 58, 61, 63, 94n101, 96, 134n143, 147, 151, 153, 163, 171–173, 189, 197, 216
Oratio (Sampson) 180
orthodoxy 27, 42, 83n53, 97, 112, 120, 146, 186, 206. *See also* heresy
Ortulus Anime (Joye) 54n88, 110–111
Oxford 25, 43, 56, 81, 97, 106, 186

Packington, Augustine 73n7, 105
papacy 5, 49, 53, 89, 101, 103, 143, 147, 166n104, 167, 179. *See also* pope(s)
Paraclesis (Erasmus) 67
parish 52, 56n100, 58, 98, 183, 192, 198, 202
Parliament 9, 103–104, 135, 138, 140–141, 146n4, 148–150, 179, 193, 203, 212n130
Paris 17, 183, 192n33
Paul of Tarsus 26, 36, 66n152, 162–163, 168, 173
Paul's Cross 3, 24n112, 42n35, 74, 105, 112
Peasants' War 28, 40n24, 156–157
Pentateuch (Tyndale) 123–124, 134, 178, 188–189
Pharisees 54, 66, 155n46
pilgrimage(s) 45–46, 71
political theology 174
poor, the 20n89, 35, 53, 60n124, 200
pope(s) 1, 16, 31, 42–44, 49, 52–54, 58–59, 73, 87n72, 89, 93, 101, 103n1, 120, 138, 140–141, 147–152, 158, 160, 166, 176–179, 195, 197. *See also* Bishop of Rome, papacy
Poyntz, John 204
Poyntz, Thomas 204–205
Practice of Prelates (Tyndale) 2, 52–53, 55, 60, 66, 82, 87, 93, 111, 120n83, 122, 126–128, 130, 134, 147, 153, 157, 159, 165n99, 167–168, 172, 177–178, 217n10
praemunire 139, 141, 148
prayer 31, 46, 58, 197n53
preaching 20–21, 24n112, 39, 42n35, 48–49, 51, 55, 58, 60, 68n155, 72, 74, 82, 100, 112, 139, 157n57, 159, 167n110, 168–170, 173n143, 184n7, 195–197, 202. *See also* sermon(s)
prelate(s) 148, 155n46, 158, 186. *See also* bishop(s)
Preservation against Death (Elyot) 23
print-culture 6–7, 93, 96–98, 100
printer(s) 3–4, 16n71, 79, 84–87, 90, 105, 122, 189, 192
printing 6–7, 15–21, 33, 71, 76n17, 80, 83, 86–87, 90–91, 93, 96–97, 191n27, 215–217
priest(s) 21, 26–27, 36, 38, 44, 48, 52–53, 55–59, 60, 68–69, 78, 147, 171, 192, 194–195, 210. *See also* clergy
priesthood of all believers 13, 37, 40, 48, 53, 98, 217
prophet(s) 29n145, 40n24, 61, 69, 136, 172–173
Prophet Isaiah (Joye) 136
Prophet Jonah (Tyndale) 189

propaganda 4, 54n87, 113, 115n52, 116, 122, 143, 148–149, 172, 174–181, 184n7, 197, 213
Protestantism 16, 98, 175, 206–207, 209, 211, 215, 217
Protestant Reformation 215
public(s) 1–15, 17, 21, 27, 32–34, 72n4, 73, 122, 125, 146, 179, 201, 212–217
public opinion 4, 8, 32, 216
public sphere 6, 8–15, 213, 217
Purgatory 35, 114, 116, 118
Puritan 9n36, 59n118, 208–211

Rastell, John 5. *See also* printer(s)
Rastell, William 5, 83, 104. *See also* printer(s)
reading 6–7, 21n97, 26, 41, 64n145, 68n155, 77–79, 90n84, 91n88, 95–97, 145n3, 170, 178, 183, 186n14, 195–196, 199–203, 209, 217
Reading 136
Read Me and Be Not Wroth (Barlow & Roye) 100, 127n12
regiments, two 34–35, 38–40, 50, 54–55, 60–61, 139, 152–154, 159, 161, 164, 166–167, 172, 174. *See also* kingdoms, two; religious sphere; secular sphere; temporal sphere
religious sphere 2, 148, 153, 173, 212n129
resistance theory 28–29
Responsio ad Lutherum (More) 46n52, 51, 76–77
revisionism 19, 24, 101, 145n2, 206–207, 209
Rinck, Herman 124
Rogers, John 84, 189
  The Bible which is all the Holy Scripture [Matthew's Bible] 135n145, 191–192, 197, 202n80, 203n87
Rome 1, 4n13, 5, 34, 53, 103, 129, 141, 149n17, 150, 156, 163, 174–175, 179, 184, 195, 197n55, 204–205, 213. *See also* Bishop of Rome
Roper, William 3n10, 44n41, 127n115, 140n173, 150–151
  Life of Thomas More 3n10, 44n41, 127n115, 140n173, 150n24
Roye, William 2, 54n90, 75
  Read Me and Be Not Wroth 100, 127n12
royal supremacy 5, 104, 129, 143, 145, 149–154, 167, 171, 174, 184, 197n55, 199, 203–204, 213

sacrament(s) 1, 13, 31, 36–37, 43–49, 52, 57, 62, 73, 87n73, 98, 116, 119, 127n115, 202
safe conduct(s) 111–114, 121, 123, 129n125, 130, 133, 137–139, 177
saint(s) 35n4, 45n45, 46, 48n58, 71
St. German, Christopher 36n6, 138, 175
  Answer to a Letter 175
salvation 37, 42, 47, 52, 68
Sampson, Richard 175, 180
  Oratio 180
sanctification 156
Schoeffer, Peter 3. *See also* printer(s)
scripture 15n65, 23, 27, 32, 38, 41, 54n88, 56–61 passim, 61–70, 93–98, 134–136, 152, 165n99, 170, 187, 195, 201, 212. *See also* Bible
  reading of 15n65, 20, 25–26, 31n153, 41, 52, 79n32, 170, 178, 186n14, 196, 199–204, 211n125
  vernacular 1, 6, 24, 27, 68n155, 93, 107n18, 116, 120, 128, 153n33, 158–159, 186–187, 199, 211n125
Second Part of the Confutation (More) 43, 49, 113
secular sphere 30–31, 60, 118, 161, 165–167, 173, 211. *See also* temporal sphere
senior 26
sermon(s) 20–21, 24n112, 42n35, 72, 74, 96–97. *See also* preaching
Shakespeare, William 209
sin 15, 35n4, 46, 160, 162, 164, 168–169, 175n149
Smith, Adam 13
sola scriptura 64, 195, 204
Solomon (king of Israel) 94n101, 171–172
Southwark 86
Speyer, Diet of 29, 37n11
spirituality 35–37
state 5–6, 8, 10–12, 34, 38n16, 60, 70, 84n53, 99, 163, 196, 200–201, 210, 216
Stokesley, John (bishop of London) 27n131, 113, 121n85, 186n14
Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere (Habermas) 8
Strype, John 71
  Ecclesiastical Memorials 71
Stubbs, John 10–11
  A Gaping Gulf (1579) 10–11, 217n11

Suffolk 80
Sum of the Holy Scripture (Bormelius) 20n89, 58n111
superstition 44–45, 93
Supplication for the Beggars (Fish) 53n84, 81, 114–121, 146
Supplication of Souls (More) 53n84, 104, 107, 114, 118–121, 146
Supplication unto Henry VIII (Barnes, 1531) 39, 51n73, 111–113, 138–139, 146, 157
Supplication unto Henry VIII (Barnes, 1534) 52n83, 57, 111n37, 151, 179
"supreme head" 1, 34, 139, 141, 145–154, 179, 189, 200
Swinnerton, Thomas 10n45, 149, 175–176, 179
  Little Treatise against the Muttering of Some Papists in Corners 10n45, 149, 175–176, 179
  Muster of Schismatic Bishops of Rome 176

Temporal Authority: To What Extent it Should be Obeyed (Luther) 38, 159n65, 165
temporal sphere 40, 54–55, 60, 166, 211–212. *See also* secular sphere
temporality 35–37
Ten Commandments 40, 195
Tewkesbury, John 78, 109, 140
theology 2, 6, 13, 27, 48, 53n84, 86, 90, 99, 138, 146, 171, 174, 180, 197, 208, 210n118, 217
Third Lateran Council 64
title(s) 1, 73, 107, 145–154. *See also* "defender of the faith"; "supreme head"
Tower of London 44, 137n159, 151
tradition 25n121, 44,46–49, 61–64, 68–69, 92–96, 101. *See also* verities, unwritten
translation 1–2, 21n97, 24–27, 32, 62–64, 67, 75–76, 83–85, 90, 95, 100, 119, 124, 129, 133–136, 171n129, 175, 178, 186–189, 191–194, 203–205, 209, 211
Tunstal, Cuthbert (bishop of London, bishop of Durham) 1n2, 3, 45n45, 54, 71–74, 77, 84n54, 104–105, 108n21, 121n85, 128, 135, 148, 198, 212
Turk(s) 156, 164
Tyball, John 18, 71–72, 81, 112
Tyndale, John 122
Tyndale, William
  and humanism 67–68, 95
  and Stephen Vaughn 121–137 passim
  Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue 50, 77, 82, 111, 124n101, 125–126, 131, 133–134
  appeal to the public 1–5, 14–15, 212–213, 217
  at Oxford 43, 56
  Compendious Introduction to Romans 66n152
  death 5, 84, 98, 205, 210
  Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount 30, 135, 154, 159, 161, 169–170, 172
  legacy 27–31, 204–213
  New Testament [Cologne] (1525) 24, 124, 135n144, 161, 208n109
  New Testament [Worms] (1526) 3, 18, 25, 65, 84, 95–96, 135n144, 186, 203, 216n5
  New Testament [Antwerp] (1534) 29n142, 78–79
  Obedience of a Christian Man 2n4, 23n107, 28, 30–31, 48, 54–58, 65, 79, 82, 86–89, 94, 117–122, 127n115, 131, 148n13, 153–155, 157–159, 162, 164, 166, 168, 172–173, 176, 180, 197n59, 200, 205
  on Henry VIII's divorce 93, 120n83, 122, 127, 130, 177–178, 212
  on scripture 61–67 passim
  on the church 50–61 passim
  on the two kingdoms/regiments 39–41, 50, 54, 58–61, 70, 86, 199n131, 154–174 passim
  Pentateuch 123–124, 134, 178, 188–189
  Practice of Prelates 2, 52–53, 55, 60, 66, 82, 87, 93, 111, 120n83, 122, 126–128, 130, 134, 147, 153, 157, 159, 165n99, 167–168, 172, 177–178, 217n10
  Prophet Jonah 189
  Wicked Mammon 58, 82, 86, 134, 162, 205
tyranny 160

Utopia (More) 22, 32–33, 42, 44n44, 84, 164n97

van Ruremund, Christoffel 3, 84. *See also* printer(s)

Vaughn, Stephen 5, 33, 101, 112, 121–140, 150n24, 151, 177, 179, 205
verities, unwritten 61–65. *See also* tradition
vernacularization 15, 21–27, 71, 217
violence 55, 100n131, 157, 161–163, 167, 212
Vulgate (Jerome) 21n97, 24, 56, 67n155, 78, 134n143

Whitchurch, Edward 184, 189, 191–192. *See also* printer(s)
White, Raulins 20
Whole Works of Tyndale, Frith, and Barnes (Foxe) 86–87, 151
Wicked Mammon (Tyndale) 58, 82, 86, 134, 162, 205
Wittenberg 26, 39, 72, 112
Wolsey, Thomas (archbishop of Canterbury) 4, 54, 73–74, 80–81, 85, 103, 105–107, 115, 124, 127–128, 140–141, 148, 177
women 8, 19, 23, 31n153, 41, 48–49, 86, 88, 96, 201, 203
woodcut(s) 16–17, 34, 183–198, 201, 203–204
Word of God 37, 57, 180–181, 184, 189, 194n41, 196, 199, 201, 203–204. *See also* Bible, scripture
Worms 3, 18, 25, 65, 79, 84–85, 95–96, 135n144, 186, 216n5
Wyclif, John 18n80, 25, 215

Zwingli, Ulrich 20n93, 36, 46n52, 53, 157n54
Zwinglians 42